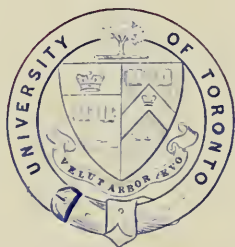




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THE
PHILOLOGICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL
WORKS
OF
CHARLES BUTLER,
ESQUIRE,
OF LINCOLN'S-INN.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.
CONTAINING
THE LIVES
OF SEVERAL
EMINENT PERSONS.

SECOND EDITION.

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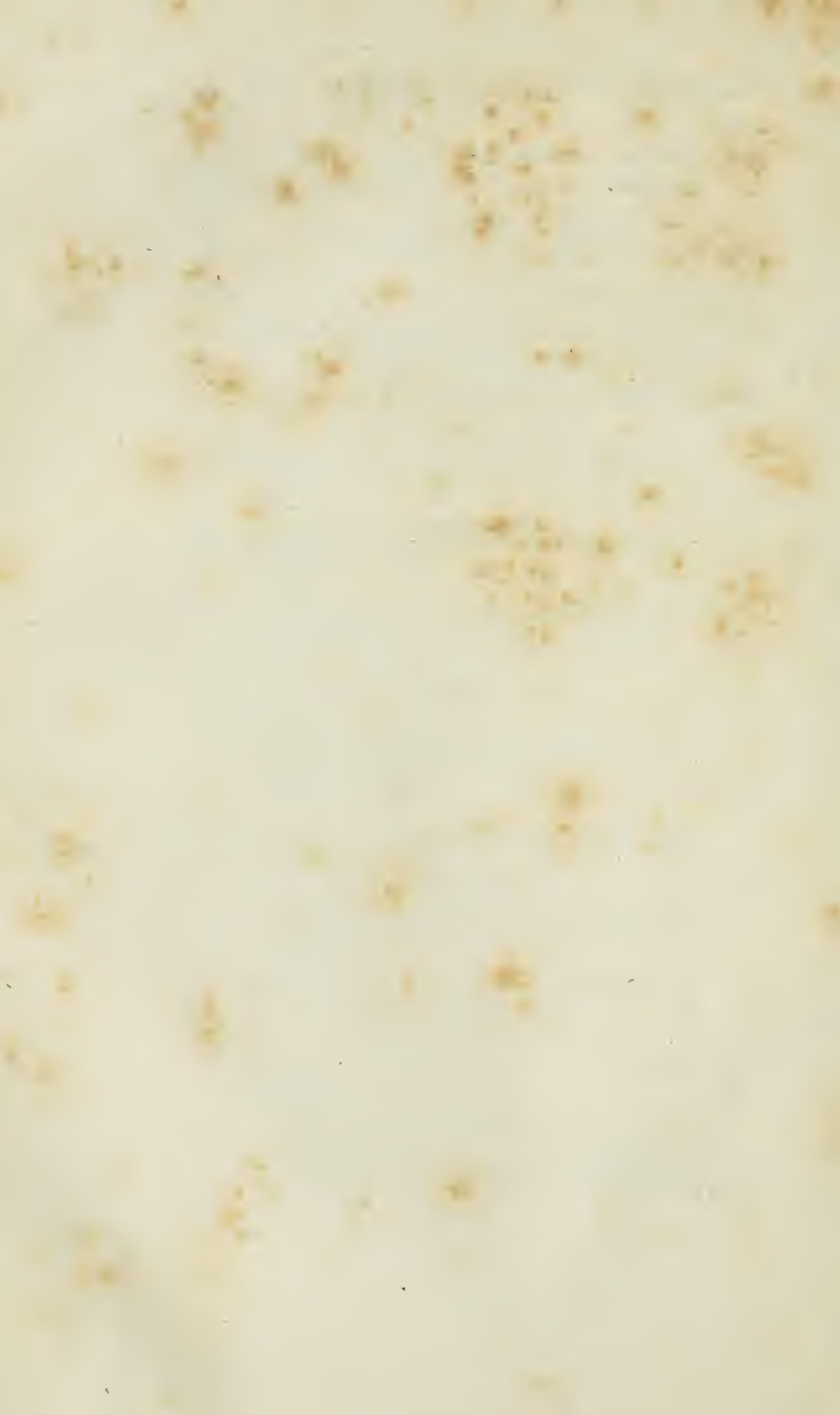
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THE
L I F E
OF
F E N E L O N,
ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY.



THE
LIFE OF FENELON.

CHAP. I.

Principal Writers of the Life of Fenelon.

WITH the name of Fenelon, the most pleasing ideas are associated. To singular elevation both of genius and sentiment, he united extreme modesty and simplicity; unconquerably firm in every thing, which he considered a duty, he displayed, both on great and ordinary occasions, a meekness, which nothing could discompose. In the midst of a voluptuous court, he practised the virtues of an anchorite; equally humble and elegant, severe to himself and indulgent to others, a mysterious holiness hangs on his character and attracts our veneration, while his misfortunes shed over him a tinge of distress, which excites our tenderest sympathy.

Not long after his decease, a short account of his life was published by the *chevalier Ramsay*, who had been the preceptor of Prince Charles, the

grandson of our James the second. The chevalier Ramsay passed several years in the strictest intimacy with Fenelon, and, after Fenelon's decease, was entrusted by his family, with his papers. In 1734, a *great nephew of Fenelon* published memoirs of him, which are short, but contain some curious details. A third account of the Life of Fenelon was published in 1787, by *father Querbeuf*, an ex-jesuit. In 1808, a Life of Fenelon was published in three volumes octavo, by *M. de Bausset*, bishop of Alais at the beginning of the French Revolution, and afterwards member of the imperial chapter of the church of St. Denis at Paris. It has reached a second edition. He seems to have had access to all the papers in the possession of the family of Fenelon, which could be of use to him, in the composition of his work. Some severe animadversions on it, on account of the alleged injustice of some parts of it, to Bossuet, and to the Portroyalists, and the appellants from the Bull Unigenitus, are contained in *Two Letters, addressed to M. de Bausset, by l'Abbé Tabaraud, Paris, 1809, two volumes 8vo.*

From the work, of M. de Bausset, the following account of the Life of Fenelon is principally extracted; but due consideration has been paid to the letters of M. de Bausset's adversary.

CHAP. 2.

Family of Fenelon.

THE village of Salignac, from which the family of Fenelon took its title, lies at the distance of about two leagues from Sarlat. In 1460, it was raised to a Barony. On the decease of Anthony de Salignac, governor of Peregord and Limousin under John d'Albrêt, King of Navarre, it descended to his eldest son, and, on the decease of that son without issue male, it descended to his daughter and heiress. She married into the house of Birlo, and on her marriage it was stipulated that the descendants of it should use the surname and arms of Salignac, with their family surname and arms. The surname of Salignac was also used by the younger son of Anthony de Salignac. From him, Fenelon, the subject of these pages, lineally descended. Bernard, his great grandfather, was sent ambassador by the court of France to Queen Elizabeth ; and history mentions to his honour, that, when he was desired by his court to justify to her the massacre at Paris on St. Bartholomew's day, he refused the unwarrantable commission.

Francis de Salignac de la Mothe Fenelon, whose life is now presented to the reader, was a son, by a second marriage, of Pons de Salignac, count of La Mothe Fenelon. The marquis de Fenelon, his uncle,

took on himself the charge of his education. The marquis's character appears to have been truly respectable. The great Condé used to say of him, that "he was equally qualified for conversation, for the field, and for the cabinet." An idea may be formed of the openness of his disposition, and the austerity of his principles, by what he said to M. de Harlai, on his nomination to the archbishoprick of Paris ;—"There is a wide difference, my right reverend Lord, between the day, when the nomination to such an office brings to the party the compliments of the whole kingdom, and the day, on which he appears before God, to render to him an account of its administration." M. Olier, the founder of the congregation of St. Sulpice, engaged the marquis in an extraordinary project. The law of duelling, was once, in France, as it was once in most other kingdoms of Europe, a part of the civil jurisprudence of the country. In 1547, a duel was fought by the count Guy Chabot and the count of Chaterguerrai, in the presence of Henry the second and his court. The count of Chaterguerrai was mortally wounded; his death affected the monarch so much, that he solemnly vowed not to permit another duel. Cardinal Richelieu repressed duelling, by some extraordinary examples of severity; after his death, it burst out with great fury. M. Olier conceived a plan of supplying the insufficiency of the law, by putting honour in opposition to itself. With this

view, he formed an association of gentlemen of tried valour, who, by a writing signed with their hands, to which the solemnity of an oath was to be added, were to oblige themselves never to give or accept a challenge, and never to serve as seconds in a duel. The marquis of Fenelon was placed at the head of the association; and no one was admitted into it, who had not eminently distinguished himself in the service. On the Sunday of Pentecost, in the year 1651, in the midst of an immense concourse, they assembled in the church of St. Sulpice, and put into the hands of M. Olier, a solemn instrument, expressing their firm and unalterable resolution, never to be principals or seconds in a duel, and to discourage duelling to the utmost of their power. The great Condé was struck with the proceeding; "A person," he said to the marquis of Fenelon, "must have the opinion which I have of your valour, not to be alarmed at seeing you the first to break the ice on such an occasion."

Lewis the fourteenth seconded the views of the respectable pastor: he took a solemn oath not to pardon a duel, and in the course of his reign, published several severe laws against duelling: by the last of them he established a court, composed of the marshals of France, to hear and determine all cases of honour. They were invested with ample powers, and the severest penalties were enacted against those, who should give or accept a

challenge, or otherwise disobey their decrees. Still duelling continued ; and the ordinance was eluded, by the distinction between duel and rencontre : the latter was supposed to be unpremeditated, and was therefore held not to fall within the laws against duelling, which was supposed to be premeditated. To prevent this evasion, Lewis the fifteenth published his ordinance of 1723, which, after confirming the laws of his predecessors against duels, provided, that though the rencontre were quite sudden and unpremeditated, the aggressor should be punished with death. But this ordinance had little effect. At length good sense came to the aid of law ; so that towards the end of that monarch's reign, a duel was no longer essential to a character for personal honour and bravery. The law of duel once also made a part of the English jurisprudence. In 1651, a duel was awarded by the court of chivalry between Donald Lord Rea, and Mr. David Ramsay, and all the preliminaries of place, time, and weapons were adjusted by his majesty's letters patent ; but, a few days before the combat was to have taken place, his majesty, by a letter, addressed to the lord constable and lord marshal, revoked his letters patent, and enjoined the parties not to proceed to combat.

Duelling was never so common in England as on the continent. It was a common observation of foreigners, that many circumstances and expressions pass as matters of course in England, which would

be considered heinous offences among them. They attribute it to the roughness of political discussion in the House of Commons, which influences, more than we ourselves are aware of, our manners in private life. The only circumstance which occurs in the jurisprudence of England, of a person condemned capitally for a duel, is the case of major Oneby, reported by sir John Strange, (page 766,) and that case was attended with circumstances of particular aggravation. The major prevented his execution by laying violent hands on himself, in the night which was to precede it.

CHAP. III.

The Youth of Fenelon.

A. D. 1651. ÆT. 1.

FRANCIS de Salignac de la Mothe Fenelon, archbishop of Cambray, was born in the castle of Fenelon, in Peregord, on the sixth day of August, 1651. M. de Bausset informs us, that the early years of Fenelon were distinguished by many traits, both of courage and moderation, which were surprising in a child, and which we should read with pleasure, even in the life of a person less eminent. We wish he had communicated some of them to his readers, as every trait, indicating a future Fenelon, must be interesting. The same author

informs us that Fenelon acquired, at a very early age, that charm of style, which so particularly marks his writings. As soon as his years permitted, he embraced the ecclesiastical state. At this important part of the life of Fenelon M. de Bausset stops to give a general view of the church of France at that period: we shall select from it the most striking parts of his account of the great rival bodies, the Jesuits and Jansenists.

“ The Institute of the Jesuits,” says M. Bausset, “ to which no other institution ever was or ever could be compared, for the energy, foresight, and depth of design, with which it was planned and conducted, was calculated to embrace in its vast functions, all the orders and classes of society, and all the elements that make a part of its civil or religious powers. Versed in every species of knowledge, its members derived from it, that consideration which superior talents and knowledge seldom fail to confer. The confidence which roman catholic governments placed in the jesuits, and the success of their general scheme of education, threw the instruction of youth almost exclusively into their hands. The severity of their manners, their temperance, their personal decency and disinterestedness, did them honour as religious men and citizens. These were never contested by their enemies; and they were a complete refutation of the charges of loose morality, so often imputed to them. The organization of the body was so perfect, that it

neither had youth nor age. Immediately on its appearance, it formed establishments in every catholic state, attacked the descendants of Luther in all their subdivisions, and founded missions in the East, in the wilds of America, in the Indies, in China, and in Japan. At the end of two centuries the order was in full vigour of maturity."

"By what spirit of frenzy," exclaims M. Bausset, "did it happen, that the roman catholic governments, whom they served so well, deprived themselves of such useful defenders? The silly and laughable charges against the jesuits, which were made a pretence for their dissolution, are now scarcely remembered. But it is recollected, that their accusers dealt in general charges; and that, while the heaviest accusations were brought against the whole body, nothing was proved against individuals. In every part of catholic Europe, public instruction ceased on the banishment of the jesuits: this is equally acknowledged by their enemies and friends."

Such is M. Bausset's account of the jesuits, and such, to this hour, is the general language of roman catholics in their regard.

He then presents his readers with a view of the jansenists, confining it chiefly to those, who, from their residence in the convent of Port-royal or its neighbourhood, or from connections with them, obtained the appellation of Portroyalists.—In every æra of the christian religion, the learned and the

idle have attempted to sound the abyss of grace and predestination, and consumed their time in vain efforts to reconcile, with the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Deity, the moral and natural evils which he foresees and decrees, or permits. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Michael Baius, the parent of jansenism, a theologian of Louvain, was engaged in these abstruse speculations, and published a treatise on grace, which was condemned at Rome, and retracted by its author. He was supposed to allow too much to grace, and too little to free will. Molina, a Spanish jesuit, entered the lists against him, and was accused of the opposite error. The cause was carried to Rome; a congregation of cardinals was appointed to hear it: in the space of ten years, it was argued before them two hundred times; but the congregation broke up without coming to a resolution on any of the points submitted to them. Undismayed by their want of success, Jansenius, bishop of Ipres, after twenty-two years study, composed a large volume on the subject, in which, if he did not adopt the system of Baius, he adopted a system directly opposite to that of Molina. The jesuits and their adherents attacked his work: five propositions were extracted from it, not as existing in it literally, but as containing the essence or ultimate tendency of its doctrines. They were formally condemned by the Pope, and the universal church acquiesced in their condemnation.

But the advocates of Jansenius rallied: they admitted that the propositions were erroneous, but denied that any of them were contained in the writings of Jansenius, or were fairly inferable from his principles. This most important point, whether an ill-written book, of an obscure Flemish prelate, contained five propositions on an unintelligible subject, was the origin of a dispute, which continued for two centuries, and, at different times, convulsed both the church and state of France to their centres: the progress of the controversy will be mentioned in a future part of this work.

Among the jansenists, the family of Arnaud held a distinguished rank. One of that family was abbess of Port-royal, a convent in a solitary uncultivated tract of land in the neighbourhood of Paris; and several of her relations were members of the community. The celebrated Anthony d'Arnaud, the two Le Maitres, and Le Sacy retired to the same spot, and were followed by several persons of rank and talent. They spent their whole time in prayer and study; and their writings are amongst the ablest compositions in the French language. Their enemies admitted that they carried it to its perfection, and fixed its standard. The reign of Lewis the fourteenth, so famous for its literary glory, produced no greater writers than those who inhabited the solitude of Port-royal. Unfortunately for religion, literature and science, too

much of their time was consumed in advocating the cause of jansenism.

M. de Bausset then proceeds to give an account of the Sulpiciens, a community of secular priests, far inferior in renown to the jesuits or jansenists, but not without considerable celebrity in their day.

The account which M. de Bausset gives of them, is most edifying. Avoiding public notice, engaging in no contest, resigning to others those good works which confer celebrity, it was their object to be actively employed in the service of the church in her most obscure and humble functions; and within that modest but useful line of duty, their exertions were uniformly confined. They had numerous establishments in France; and had existed one hundred and fifty years without the slightest abatement of their first fervour, when, at the beginning of the French revolution, they perished in the general wreck of what was most respectable or holy in France. M. de Bausset mentions, as a circumstance greatly to their honour, that during the whole term of their existence, their concerns never once became the subject of a suit at law. To the jesuits, Fenelon was always greatly attached: from the jansenists he always kept at a great distance; nothing could be more contrary to his disposition, than their gloomy devotion and immoderate severity. His spiritual director, M. Tronson, was superiour of St. Sulpice. This

Circumstance attached Fenelon to the Sulpiciens, and his attachment to them continued through his life.—A more detailed account of the Jesuits and Jansenists may be found in the writer's *Historical and Biographical Memoirs of the Church of France during the Reigns of Lewis the 14th and Lewis the 15th.*

CHAP. IV.

Fenelon is ordained Priest.

A. D. 1676. ÆT. 25.

IN the seminary of St. Sulpice, Fenelon was ordained priest ; he passed the three following years in absolute retirement : after which, by the desire of the curate of the parish of St. Sulpice, he delivered, on Sundays and festivals, in the church of the parish, a course of familiar explanations of the Old and New Testament ; these first made him known to the public. It appears that in the fervour of his zeal, he once intended to transport himself to Canada, and devote his life to the conversion of the savages ; and that afterwards, on finding his constitution would not endure the cold of that climate, he changed his resolution, and determined to dedicate himself to the missions of the East. M. de Bausset favours us with a letter written by him, under this impression, which shows a mind saturated with religious and classical enthusiasm.

“ Several trifling accidents have delayed, till this moment, my return to Paris ; but now at last, I set off, and I almost fly. With this voyage in my thoughts, I have a greater voyage in contemplation. All Greece opens herself to me ; the Sultan retires in a fright ; the Peloponnesus already begins to breathe in freedom. Again, will the church of Corinth flourish ; again, will she hear the voice of her apostle. I feel myself transported into these delightful regions ; and, while I am collecting the precious monuments of antiquity, I seem to inhale her true spirit. I search for the Areiopagus, where St. Paul preached the unknown God to the wise of the world. But after the sacred, the profane comes for her turn, and I do not disdain to enter the Pyreum, where Socrates unfolded the plan of his republic. I ascend the double summit of Parnassus ; I pluck the laurels of Delphos, I breathe the sweets of Tempe.

“ When shall the blood of the Turks lie mingled with the blood of the Persians, on the plains of Marathon, and leave Greece to religion, to philosophy, and to the fine arts, which regard her, as their natural soil ?

“ *Arva beata,*

“ *Petamus Arva, divitus et insulæ !*

“ O island ! consecrated by the heavenly visions of the beloved disciple ; never shall I forget thee ! On your soil, I will kiss the footsteps of the evangelist, and fancy I behold the heavens open. Then

shall I be seized with indignation against the false prophet, who attempted to unfold the oracles of the true prophet ; and return thanks to God, who did not destroy his church, as he destroyed Babylon ; but chained up the dragon and crowned his church with victory. The schism disappears ;—the East and West are re-united ;—and Asia, after a long night, sees the day return to her. The land consecrated by the cross of Christ, and watered by his blood, is delivered from those, who profaned her, and is invested with new glories.—Finally, the children of Abraham, scattered over the earth and more numerous than the stars of the heavens, are collected from the four winds, and come in crowds to adore the Christ, whose side they pierced on the cross.

“ This is sufficient : you will rejoice to hear this is the last of my letters ; and the last of my enthusiastick flights, with which you will be importuned.

“ FR. DE FENELON.”

While Fenelon lived in this happy state, he contracted an intimate friendship with two persons whose names, like his own, will reach the latest posterity, Bossuet and the Abbé Fleury. To the former, who was greatly his superior in years, and was then in the zenith of his great reputation, he particularly attached himself. Bossuet, denying himself to all others, used to permit Fenelon and

Fleury to accompany him to Germigny, the country residence of the bishops of Meaux. They had stated hours of prayer, private study, and relaxation; and in these last, under the humble name of conversation, the bishop unfolded to them all his sacred and literary stores of knowledge. Nothing could exceed the bishop's regard for Fenelon, or Fenelon's veneration for the bishop. Who does not lament that the union of such men was ever dissolved!

CHAP. V.

Fenelon is employed on the Missions among the new converted Protestants.

A. D. 1685. ÆT. 34.

IT appears that Fenelon first attracted the favour of Lewis the fourteenth by his great success in the religious missions, which, on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, were undertaken, by the direction of that monarch, for proselytising the hugonots to the catholic religion, and confirming the faith of the new converts.

By the edict of Nantes, Henry the fourth granted to the hugonots, the free exercise of their religion, and placed them nearly on an equality of civil rights with his other subjects. Their pastors were salarised at the expence of the state; their churches

were allowed to choose deputies, who were to hold assemblies for regulating their internal concerns; and they were permitted to retain some fortified towns, and garrison them with troops of their own persuasion, as a security for the observance of the edict. With some jealousy on the side of the catholics, and some discontent on the side of the hugonots, the edict was observed, during the reign of Henry the fourth, without either party's having any just cause of complaint. The edict was confirmed by his successors immediately after his accession to the throne; but the hugonots were discountenanced, and had a very small share of the favours of government or the smiles of the court. This naturally encreased their discontent, and their discontent was fomented by the different parties who contended for the favour of the court, and who regularly patronized the hugonots, while they were in opposition, and regularly neglected them, while they were in administration. At length, the hugonots broke out into open war; they were supported by the English, but the war was soon terminated by the taking of the city of La Rochelle. The hugonots were then obliged to deliver up their forfeited towns: in other respects, the edict remained in force; and it was confirmed to them by Lewis the fourteenth, on his accession to the throne.

But the extinction of the hugonot religion, in every part of his dominions, was one of that

monarch's most favorite projects, and, through the whole of his reign, pursued by him with undeviating attention. By his direction, all means of favour and exclusion were practised to make proselytes: the ministers of the hugonots were laid under many restraints, in the exercise of their functions; their consistories and synods were seldom allowed to meet; their schools of theology and philosophy were broken up; and seven hundred of their churches were taken from them or demolished:—finally, by an edict of the 23d of October 1685, Lewis the fourteenth absolutely revoked the edict of Nantes; and, by a second edict of the same day, interdicted wholly to the hugonots, the exercise of their religion, ordered the ministers to quit the kingdom, employed priests to educate the children of the hugonots in the catholic religion, and commanded all the intendants of provinces and governors of towns to cause the edict to be rigidly enforced. Some of them exceeded their instructions, and, under the pretence of preserving the priests from insult, and compelling the attendance of the children at mass and public instruction, distributed soldiers in the principal places inhabited by hugonots, and connived at their outrages. The soldiers were principally taken out of the dragoon companies; which gave their employment the appellation of the Dragonade. To subtract themselves from this persecution, two hundred thousand families are said,—probably their number is greatly

exaggerated,—to have quitted France. Dispersing themselves in the protestant states, they enriched them with their arts and industry, and made them resound with their execrations of their tyrannical persecutor. It is greatly to the honour both of Fenelon and of Bossuet, that they blamed the use of compulsion in effecting the religious conversion of the hugonots.

“ Violence and persecution,” says M. Bausset, “ were so contrary to the character and principles of Fenelon, that he condemned, without hesitation, the rigour which some agents of persons in power employed against the peaceable and submissive hugonots. He equally condemned the blind zeal, with which some persons endeavoured to force acts of conformity from those, who were not sincerely convinced, but only intimidated and terrified. He knew that this species of conformity must necessarily be rather an act of hypocrisy, than a real act of religion.”

In a letter to the duke of Beauvilliers, Fenelon mentions, that he was informed by public report, that the council on the affairs of the hugonots, to which the duke belonged, was determined on rigorous measures. “ That,” says Fenelon, “ is not the true spirit of the gospel. The work of God is not effected, in the heart, by force.” The mareschal of Noailles consulted Fenelon on the line of conduct he should pursue, in respect to the hugonot soldiers under his command. In his answer,

Fenelon says, " That tormenting and teasing heretic soldiers into conversion will answer no end ; it will not succeed ; it will only produce hypocrites ; the converts made by them will desert in crowds. If an officer, or any other person can insinuate the truth into their hearts, or excite in them a desire of instruction, it is well ; but there should be no constraint, no indirect officiousness. When they are ill, a catholic officer may visit them, procure them assistance, and drop on them a few salutary words. If that produce no good, and the sickness continue, one may go a little further, but softly, and without constraint. One may hint, that the ancient is the best church, and derived to us immediately from the apostles. If the sick person be unable to enter into this, you should be satisfied with leading him to make some acts of sorrow for his sins, and some acts of faith and charity, adding words like these, O my God ! I submit to whatever the true church teaches. In whatever place she resides, I acknowledge her for my mother."

The chevalier Ramsay relates, that Fenelon recommended to prince Charles, the grandson of our James the second, never to use compulsion in matters of religion. " No human power," he said, " can force the impenetrable retrenchments of the freedom of the mind. Compulsion never persuades, it only makes hypocrites. When kings interfere in matters of religion, they don't protect it, they enslave it. Give civil liberty to all, not

by approving all religions, as indifferent, but by permitting in patience what God permits, and by endeavouring to bring persons to what is right by mildness and persuasion."

The council, which Fenelon gave to others, he was himself the first to practise. The province of Poitou was appointed for the scene of his mission. When he was presented to Lewis the fourteenth, the only request he made to the monarch was, that the troops, and every species of military parade, might be removed to a great distance from the province.—We have mentioned that the sentiments of Bossuet on this subject agreed with those of Fenelon ; and we add with pleasure, that both the chancellor d'Aguesseau, and the chancellor's father, the intendant of Languedoc, concurred with them in the same opinion. The latter resigned his office of intendant, rather than witness the dragonade.

CHAP. VI.

Fenelon publishes his Treatises on the Mission of the Clergy, and Female Education.

A. D. 1607. ÆT. 36.

THE object of the first of these treatises is to prove that the great majority of mankind, being of themselves wholly incapable of forming a just judgment on the several articles of the christian

faith, divine wisdom could afford them no surer guide to lead them to truth, than a visible authority, deriving its origin from the apostles, and from Jesus Christ himself, and continued through an uninterrupted succession of pastors, to the end of time.—Of all the points in dispute between roman catholics and protestants, this perhaps is the most important. At the celebrated conference between Bossuet and Claude, on the subject of the church, a succinct account of which is given by the writer in his life of Bossuet, it seems to have been agreed by them, that every point, on which the two churches were divided, would be settled by a decision of this question. Bossuet and Fenelon contended that the roman catholics alone can show an uninterrupted succession of pastors, consecrated by a form, which may be traced to the apostles, while the reformed churches cannot trace their ancestry beyond the sixteenth century. This circumstance of itself is said by them to decide the question in favour of the roman catholic church. The system and the arguments of both are the same ; but Bossuet writes for the learned and informed ; Fenelon for the simple and uninformed.

His treatise on Female Education endeared him to every mother and every daughter in France. He observes in it, that the education of a daughter should begin with her birth, as it is impossible to attend too soon to her physical or mental faculties ; that, in her earliest years, instruction should be

conveyed to her, chiefly in narrative ; which is indirect instruction ; but that, even in her very earliest years, her instruction should be solid ; so that nothing should be allowed a place in her faith or exercises of devotion, which is not drawn from the gospel, or which the church does not sanction. She should be accustomed to reject idle histories, and kept from devotions, indiscreetly introduced, and not authorized by the church. The Historical Catechism of Fleury, he mentions in his treatise three times, with great commendation. Of the female character he expresses himself in terms of the highest praise ; “ Women,” he says, “ were designed by their native elegance and gentleness to endear domestic life to man ; to make virtue lovely to children, to spread round them order and grace, and give society its highest polish. No attainment can be above beings, whose end and aim it is, to accomplish purposes at once so elegant, and so salutary ; every means should be used to invigorate by principle and culture, such native excellence and grace.”

CHAP. VII.

Fenelon is appointed Preceptor to the duke of Burgundy, the duke of Anjou, and the duke of Berri, the grandsons of Lewis the fourteenth.

A. D. 1609. ÆT. 38.

FENELON'S success in his missions in Poitou completely satisfied the expectations, which he had raised. Soon after his return from them, he was appointed preceptor to the duke of Burgundy, the duke of Anjou, and the duke of Berri, the three sons of the dauphin.

Whatever were the defects in the character of Lewis the fourteenth, it is allowed that he possessed, in the highest degree, the merit of discovering and employing the talents of his subjects. Three times in the course of his reign he had to appoint the governors and preceptors of the royal princes; and, on each of these occasions, the appointment did him honour. The education of the dauphin was intrusted to the duke of Mortausier and Bossuet; and when the dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, and Berri, the sons of the dauphin, arrived at a proper age, he appointed the duke of Beauvilliers their governor.

The duke of Beauvilliers was married to a daughter of the celebrated Colbert: Colbert's two

other daughters were married to the dukes of Chevreuse and Mortêmar; all the dukes held charges of importance in the court, and all the writers of the time recount, in their praise, that, while they were attentive to please the king, by an anxious discharge of their duties, none of them ever flattered him in his irregularities, or paid court to the objects of his unlawful attachments. Madame de Montespan never, in the long course of her long sway, saw any of them among her courtiers. In the midst of his wanderings, Lewis always shewed sentiments of decency and delicacy: he was struck with the contrast between the dignified conduct of this family and the ignoble subserviency of the generality of his courtiers. This circumstance first recommended the duke of Beauvilliers to his favour, and, when the duke of Burgundy reached his eighth year, the monarch appointed the duke of Beauvilliers the governor of the duke of Burgundy and his two brothers, with an unlimited power of nominating all the other officers about them, and all their inferior attendants. The duke immediately appointed Fenelon to the place of preceptor, and Fleury to the place of sub-preceptor. The general impression of Fenelon's character at this time, and the circumstances which immediately led to his appointment, are thus mentioned by the duke de St. Simon.

“ The duke de Beauvilliers, a very pious nobleman, was a great friend of the congregation of

St. Sulpice. On some occasion, he remarked a tall person, with a countenance worn by profound study, with eyes pouring fire like a furnace, and a physiognomy, which none, that once had beheld, could ever forget. It combined in it, the most opposite traits of character ; but none of them contradicted the other. It had a mixture of gravity and gallantry, of the serious and the gay ; of the doctor in divinity, of the bishop and the high nobleman ; but acuteness, grace, decency, and above all, dignity predominated. It required exertion to cease from gazing on him. Every portrait of him spoke ; but no painter gave an idea of the justness or the harmony of the original, or of the delicacy which marked each feature of his countenance. In his manners, there was a similar relief of opposite qualities ; they were easy, and made every person around him easy ; that fine taste, which only habits of high life can confer, entered, as of its own accord, into his conversation, with a natural, soft, flowing and insinuating eloquence ; a turn of expression, always natural, neat and pleasing, and a singular talent of expressing intelligibly the most abstruse ideas ; an easy flow of wit, the quality and quantity of which, exactly suitable to the person and the occasion for which it was intended, he could turn at pleasure. In company with him, it was impossible to quit him ; when he stole away, it was impossible not to run in search of him.

“ The duke de Beauvilliers was subdued by such an assemblage of agreeable qualities, and wished that Madame de Maintenon should share in his admiration. Twice a week, she dined at the hotel de Beauvilliers, or the hotel de Chevreuse, and made a fifth with the two sisters and their husbands ; a bell was on the table, and no servant admitted, that they might converse without restraint. It was a sanctuary, from which the court was excluded ; but Fenelon was admitted. The purity of his morals obtained for him the esteem of the little society ; his feeling piety gained him their hearts ; they were enchanted by his spirituality ; so that, when the duke of Beauvilliers was named governor of the duke of Burgundy, with power to appoint the preceptor, he immediately cast his eyes on Fenelon.”

No choice was ever more applauded by the public ;—among the letters, which Fenelon received on the occasion, M. de Bausset presents us with one addressed to him by his friend M. Tronson, an extract of which must be acceptable to our readers.

“ The education, which his majesty has been pleased to entrust to you, is so connected with the state and the good of the church, that it is impossible for me not to be highly pleased in seeing it put into such good hands. But my joy changes into alarm, when I consider the dangers to which it exposes you. It is true that it gives you an

opportunity of doing much good ; but it is also true, that it may occasion your being the cause of much evil. You now live in a country, where the gospel of Christ is little known ; and where, even those acquainted with it, make use of it chiefly to do themselves honour before men. It is not necessary to live a great while in it, to bring yourself to regard, as immoderate and excessive, the maxims, which, when you meditated on them at the foot of the cross, appeared to you clear ; and to think the most obvious and clear duties, doubtful and impracticable. Circumstances will arise, in which you will be tempted to think prudence and charity require of you to make terms with the world ; but how strange will it be for a christian, and still more for a priest, to enter into any compromise with the enemy of his salvation ! Truly, sir, your situation is dangerous : confess that it is difficult not to lose yourself in it, and that to conduct yourself in it properly, requires no common virtue. If ever the study and meditation of the Scriptures were necessary to you, they are at this time indispensable. It should seem, that hitherto you have chiefly wanted it for filling your mind with just notions, and nourishing her with the lessons of eternal truth ; henceforth you stand in absolute need of it for keeping yourself free from bad impressions, for preserving yourself from falsehood. It is of infinite consequence to you never to lose sight of the terrible moment of death, when the glory of the world will

disappear like a dream, and every created object, to whom you would then seek for support, will sink under you.”—This was certainly the language of friendship.

CHAP. VIII.

Fenelon's Education of the duke of Burgundy.

As the duke of Burgundy was the first of the three royal brothers, in succession to the crown of France, he particularly engaged the attention of Fenelon; his character is thus described by the duke de St. Simon.

“ The duke of Burgundy was born terrible, and during his first years, continued an object of terror. Hearthearted, irascible, to the extreme of passion, even against inanimate objects, impetuous to a degree of fury, incapable of bearing the least opposition to his wishes, even from time or climate, without putting himself into paroxysms of rage that made one tremble for his existence, (a condition in which I have often seen him), stubborn in the highest degree, passionate in the pursuit of every kind of pleasure, addicted to the gratifications of the table and violent hunting, delighted, to a degree of ecstasy, with music, and with deep play, in which he could not endure to lose, and in which it was personally dangerous to be engaged with him; in fine, abandoned to all the passions, and

transported by every kind of pleasure ; often ferocious, naturally born to cruelty, barbarous in his raillery, seizing the ridiculous with astonishing justness ; high as the clouds, in his own opinion, considering other men as atoms, with which he had no resemblance, and regarding his brothers, though they were educated on an equality with him, as intermediate beings, between him and the rest of the human race :—but even in his passions, talent beamed from him : his repartees were surprising ; in his answers, there was always something of justness and depth ; he seemed to play with the most abstract subjects ; the extent and vivacity of his genius were astonishing : but they always kept him from attending to any one thing at a time, and thus made him incapable of learning any thing.—The prodigy was, that, in a short space of time, religion and the grace of God, made him a new man ; and changed those terrible qualities into all the opposite virtues. From the abyss which I have described, there arose a prince, affable, gentle, moderate, patient, modest, humble, austere only to himself, attentive to his duties, and sensible of their great extent. His only object appeared to be, to perform all his actual duties of a son and subject, and to qualify himself for his future obligations.”

Fenelon gave up himself entirely to the duties of his employment ; he foresaw, says M. de Bausset, that, with the singular disposition which his pupil

had received from nature, he would make that rapid progress in science, which none but persons of extraordinary genius can make, and which is not always attainable by the offspring of kings. The difficulty was to subdue the temper, thus forcibly constituted, in such a manner, as to preserve its nobler parts, while all that was too violent in it, was removed. It was the object of Fenelon to place on the throne that perfect form of virtue, which he had in his mind, after the example of the great artists of antiquity, who endeavoured to express in their works, that perfect form of beauty, which they carried with them in idea.

But what care, attention, art, management, observation, and choice of means were necessary to model the prince into such a character!—In entering on his office, Fenelon laid down to himself a rule, to which he rigidly adhered, never to ask of the court a favour for himself, his friends, or his family. His private revenue was small, and no pecuniary income was attached to his office; our author gives us extracts of letters which shew, that though his establishment was on the smallest scale, it was with difficulty that he found money to answer his current expences. Still, he kept the narrowness of his circumstances to himself; he never asked, and till his nomination to the Abbey of St. Valery, at the end of several years after his appointment to his office, he never received a favour from the court. It was more painful to him, to refuse the

solicitations of his family that he would use his interest at court in their favour. The marchioness de Laval, the only daughter of the marquis de Fenelon, by whom he was educated, requested him to obtain a lieutenancy for her son, then four years old. Fenelon answered her by calling to her recollection his general rule ; “ I wish,” says he, “ that consistently with my principles, I could interfere in your son’s behalf, but, though my life should depend on it, I would not ask a favour of the king.” He leaves her at liberty to act for herself ; but intimates, that her solicitations would be fruitless, as the king never conferred offices on persons in early infancy, those excepted, whose fathers had been killed in battle. Other letters from him, which are cited by M. de Bausset, speak the same language.

Such a proceeding naturally raised him in the esteem of his pupil. In his general demeanor towards him, Fenelon assumed a conduct, by which, though it were full of condescension and affection, he placed himself at an immeasurable height above him. Of this, our author gives the following instance. On some occasion, Fenelon had expressed himself to the duke, in a tone of great authority : the duke was indignant ; “ not so, sir,” he said to Fenelon ; “ I know who I am, and who you are,”—Fenelon made no reply ; he put on an air of recollection, and, giving the duke a serious and sorrowful look, retired, and spoke to him no more in

the course of the day. The following morning, Fenelon entered the duke's bed-chamber while he was asleep ; ordered the curtains of his bed to be opened, and the duke to be awakened ; then, assuming a cool indifferent look, " Sir," he said, " you yesterday told me you knew who you were, and who I was. My duty obliges me to inform you, that you know neither. You imagine that you are greater than I am ; this, some valet has told you ; but you oblige me to tell you, that I am greater than you. Birth, here, is out of the question. You would pronounce a person mad, who should give himself a preference over his neighbour, because the dews of heaven had fertilized his field and not fallen on his neighbour's. You are not wiser than such a man, if you are vain of your birth : it confers on you no personal merit. You must be sensible that I am your superior in knowledge ; I have taught you every thing you know ; and, what you know, is nothing in comparison of what remains for me to teach you. With respect to authority, you have none over me. I have full and absolute authority over you. This, you have been often told by the king. You suppose I consider myself very happy in the honour of being your preceptor. Undeceive yourself ; I undertook the charge of you at the king's request ; it could be no satisfaction to me to receive so fatiguing an employment. That you may have no doubt on this head, I shall now lead you to the king, and

request him to appoint me a successor, whose exertions about you will be more successful than mine."

The duke of Burgundy was thunderstruck with this declaration. Remorse, fear, and shame for a time prevented him from speaking; "I am confounded," he cried, "for my conduct of yesterday. If you speak to the king, I am ruined for ever. If you abandon me, what will be thought of me? I promise you, yes I do promise you, that you shall be satisfied with me in future. But do you promise me,—" Fenelon would make no promise; it was not till a long continuance of good conduct had convinced him of the sincerity of his pupil's repentance, and after a formal intercession of madame de Maintenon, that Fenelon received him into favour.

In one respect, Fenelon was particularly fortunate: every one near the person of the royal prince, looked up to him with veneration, and co-operated in his plans of education. When the duke of Burgundy fell into any of those fits of anger and impatience to which he was so much subject, the governor, preceptor, masters, officers and servants, who attended him, observed a perfect silence. They avoided answering his questions; and either did not look at him, or looked at him with terror, as if they were frightened at being with a person who discovered signs of aberration of intellect, or with pity, as if they beheld a person,

whose mental malady made him an object of compassion. His books, every thing used in the way of his instruction were removed from him, as useless to a person in his deplorable state. They were not restored to him, and none of the parties resumed their general demeanour towards him, till the fit of passion entirely subsided.

It was a rule with Fenelon, to permit the duke to interrupt his studies, whenever he was inclined to enter into any useful and learned conversation. He adopted this plan the more readily, as he found such conversation tended to humanize his pupil, to soften his mind, to make him gentle and compliant, and to call forth his pleasing qualities. But study was resumed the instant the conversation ceased to be useful. So far from lessening the general hours of study, this conduct increased the duke's ardour for literature, and induced him to dedicate to it a greater portion of his time. Of his own accord, he requested some person might always read to him at his meals.

The fables, which Fenelon composed for the duke of Burgundy, are admirable. The great object of them appears to be to soften his pupil's manners, and to open his mind to humanity, beneficence, and the milder virtues. Heaven and earth and all animate and inanimate nature are called into action by them, to invite the future monarch to make justice, peace, and happiness reign on earth.

“ Who is the young hero,” say the songsters of the groves instructed by the shepherds, “ that comes among us, and appears to interest himself in our happiness? He seems pleased with our songs; he loves poetry; it will soften his heart, and make him as amiable, as he now appears haughty. May he increase in virtue, as a flower just opened by the spring; may he love the gentle pleasures of the mind; may the graces dwell on his eyes! May Minerva reign in his heart! May he equal Orpheus in the sweetness of his strains, and Hercules in his heroic actions! May he have the valour of Achilles, but none of his ferocity! May he be good, wise, beneficent! May he sympathise with men! He loves our songs; they penetrate his heart as the dew falls on our gardens parched by the sun. May the gods moderate his passions! May they ever make him happy! May he restore the golden age! May wisdom fill his soul, and spread from it over all mortals! May flowers grow under his feet!”

What an effect, exclaims M. de Bausset, must instructions, arrayed in such charms, have on a prince who was all soul and wit! But then the fables of Melanthos, and the Medal follow, which the royal pupil could not read without sinking into the earth, at the view they gave him of the deformities of his own character, and almost adoring the being, whose hand was stretched out to save him, to rescue him from himself.—“ What terrible

woe has befallen Melanthos ? Outwardly, all is right with him ; inwardly, all is wrong. Last night, he went to rest, the delight of the human race ; this morning one's ashamed of him, one must hide him. As he was dressing, a plait of his shirt displeased him ; all the long day, he is to be in a rage, and every one is to suffer ; he is an object of fear, an object of compassion ; he cries as a child, and roars as a lion. A malignant vapour blackens his imagination, as the ink soils his fingers. Don't speak to him of what gave him delight a moment since ; it is enough that he was pleased with it then, that he should not endure it now. The parties of pleasure, which lately he desired so much, now weary him ; they must be broken up ; he must contradict and irritate and complain of every one ; and then is angry that no one will lose his temper with him. When he can find no pretence for being dissatisfied with others, he turns against himself ; he blames himself, finds out that he is good for nothing, he despairs of improvement ; he takes it ill that persons will not comfort him ; he wishes to be alone ; then he can't endure solitude, and returns to society, and quarrels with all about him. They are silent, he takes offence at their silence ; they speak softly, he supposes they speak against him ; they talk in their common voice, he pretends they talk too much, and is angry that they appear gay while he is sorrowful ; they become serious, he considers it a

reproach of his faults ; they laugh, he supposes it is at him. What must we do ? be as steady and as patient as he is insupportable, and expect in peace that to-morrow morning he will be as good as he was yesterday. This strange humour passes off as it comes : when it seizes him, one would suppose that a spring of the machine was broken, and the whole run backward. He resembles the picture of a person possessed : his reason is inverted ; press him and you may make him say, at full noon, that it is night ; for, when the fit is once on him, there is no longer day or night for his dismounted intellects. Don't say to him to-morrow we will go to such a place, to divert ourselves ; the man of to-day will not be the same man to-morrow ; he, who is now making you a promise, will disappear at the instant, and in his place you'll see a certain something without shape, without name. It wills, it wills not, it threatens, it trembles, it mixes laughable haughtiness with contemptible littleness ; it cries, it laughs, it plays the fool, it is in a rage. In his fury, however, Melanthos, though wild and mad, and though he do not discover one ray of reason, is witty, is eloquent, is cunning, and abounds in repartee. Be particularly careful to say nothing to him, that is not perfectly just, exact, and reasonable ; he has all his senses about him, to take advantage of it, and put you in the wrong ; on a sudden he becomes reasonable, to show your errors. Then, a fit of distress comes on him ; he loves no one ; he

has not a friend ; every one persecutes him ; every one betrays him ; he has no obligations to any one ; wait a moment, he seems to be in need of every one ; he is full of affection, he loves every one ; he flatters, insinuates, bewitches those who could not bear him ; he confesses his errors, and laughs at his oddities ; he mimicks himself, and he mimicks himself so well, that you would think him again in his airs. After this comedy, so perfectly well acted at his own expence, you hope at last the demoniac is gone for ever. Alas ! you are quite mistaken ; to-night he will again be the demon, and to-morrow he will again laugh at himself, and continue unreclaimed.” It was impossible for the royal pupil not to recognize himself in this picture ; or to read it without emotions and resolutions of amendment.

In a fable less serious, but equally instructive, Fenelon describes Bacchus inattentive to the lessons of Silenus, and a fawn laughing at his blunders : Bacchus puts on an air of dignity, and asks the fawn, “ how he dares to laugh at the son of Jupiter ; ” the fawn coolly answers, “ why does the son of Jupiter dare to make blunders ? ”

The dialogues, which Fenelon composed for the duke of Burgundy, are in a higher style. He brings by them, the most celebrated personages of ancient and modern history before his pupil ; and all the speakers take occasion to mention some incident in their lives, that conveys to him, in

few but impressive words, some salutary truth. In every page of them, the charms of the milder virtues are happily pourtrayed; when vanity or voluptuousness are to be censured, the most pointed ridicule is used; when tyranny is to be execrated, the strongest language is adopted. A meeting of Cæsar and Cato is supposed:

“Thou wilt be greatly surprised,” says Cæsar, “when I inform thee, that I died of the wounds I received from my friends in the senate house. What treachery! “No,” replies Cato, “I am not surprized. Wast thou not the tyrant of those friends as well as of the other citizens? Was it not their duty to lend their hands to their oppressed country? It was their duty to sacrifice not only a friend but a brother, as was done by Timoleon, and even their own children, as was done by Brutus.—But, tell me, in the midst of thy previous glory, wast thou happy?—No, thou wast not. If thou hadst loved thy country, thy country would have loved thee; he, whom his country loves, wants no guards; his country watches round him. True security arises from doing good, and from interesting every one in your preservation. Thou wouldst reign and be feared. Well, thou didst reign, and thou wast feared: but mankind delivered themselves from the tyrant, and their fears of him, by the same stroke. So may all those perish, who wish to be feared by men! They have every thing to fear; all the world is interested in anticipating

their acts of tyranny, and delivering themselves from the tyrant."

Such were the exertions of Fenelon in educating the duke of Burgundy. We have seen what the duke St. Simon, whose evidence cannot be refused on this subject, says of their success. Madame de Maintenon, in one of her letters, gives the same testimony: "we saw all those defects, which alarmed us too much in the youth of the duke of Burgundy, gradually disappear. Every year produced, in him, a visible increase of virtue. Rallied at first by every one, he obtained, in the end, the admiration of the freest livers. So much had his piety changed him, that, from being the most passionate of men, he became mild, gentle, and complying; persons would have thought that mildness was his natural disposition, and that he was innately good."—All the writers of the time, who mention the duke of Burgundy, express themselves of him in the same terms.

Fenelon now began to enjoy the fruits of his labours; his success in the education of the duke of Burgundy had excited general admiration, and his conciliating manners had obtained him general love. Lewis the fourteenth presented him to the Abbey of St. Valery, one of the richest in France; and afterwards named him Archbishop of Cambray. He was consecrated in the chapel of St. Cyr, in the presence of madame de Maintenon and his three royal pupils. We enter into the feelings of

the preceptor and his pupils on this occasion. Unfortunately, it was almost the last day of the preceptor's happiness; to use an expression of the chancellor d'Aguesseau, "events soon afterwards took place that revealed the secret which caused all his calamities,—his too great taste for the pious excesses of the mystics."—This memorable circumstance in the archbishop's life must now be presented to the reader.

CHAP. IX.

Quietism.

A. D. 1696. ÆT. 45.

IN every age of christianity, different denominations of christians, both orthodox and heterodox, have aimed at a sublime spirituality above visible objects and natural feelings, and attempted, by assiduous prayer and abstraction from terrene subjects, to raise themselves to an intellectual contemplation of the Deity, and communion with him. Among them, the Quietists, to whose doctrines the subject of these pages now leads, were eminently distinguished in the ecclesiastical history of the middle ages, and of modern times.

The patriarch of modern quietists is Michael de Molinos, a Spanish priest, who resided at Rome, towards the end of the 16th century. His pious reveries procured him a considerable number of

disciples of both sexes : they were condemned by the pöpe, and his disciples were persecuted ; but they preserved an obscure existence, and, with a slight modification, or rather, under the cover of more guarded language, were revived in the age of Lewis the fourteenth, and during several years, distracted the gallican church. In a religious, and even a philosophical point of view, the controversy, to which they gave rise, is a curious subject of inquiry, and it certainly forms the most interesting part of the biography of Fenelon.

Quietism is an abuse of the science of sacred contemplation, or as it is termed in the schools, of Mystical Théology *, and an unwarranted extension of its language. Every age of the christian church furnishes contemplative writers of eminence. To a perfect understanding of the doctrines of the quietists, some acquaintance with the works of those writers is necessary : but, even with that aid, it is not very easy to give an account of them which will be found at once accurate and intelligible. This difficulty is admitted by Bossuet : he accounts for it by observing, that the errors of the quietists arose rather from an exaggeration of what in itself was good, than from their adoption of principles intrinsically erroneous : this will clearly appear from a slight view of their principal errors.

I. To love God for his own perfections, without any view to future reward or punishment, is the

* See Appendix.

highest effort of the soul : an habitual state of it is beyond the lot of man ; and, as it would exclude hope, the foundation of all christian virtue, and fear, the beginning of all christian wisdom, it cannot be considered the duty of a christian. The quietists however professed that they had attained this habitual state of divine love ; they scarcely acknowledged any other virtue ; and this supposed freedom from hope and fear, the great agitators of the human mind, was one of the principal reasons of their receiving the appellation of quietists.

II. The contemplation of the Deity raises in the soul, conceptions and feelings which she can neither express by language, nor even embody by thought. When these are at their highest elevation, a devotional silence ensues, the most profound act of homage which the Creator can receive from the creature. But a long continuation of this sublime devotion is above the natural powers of man ; and, as it would exclude prayer, an attempt to attain it, must seem a disobedience to the precepts of him, who orders us to pray always, and framed for us a form of prayer. Yet, to this sublime and perpetual silence of the human mind, under the view of the Deity, as to a common duty, the quietist aspired. All explicit acts of devotion, even of the purest or simplest faith, respecting the trinity, the incarnation, or the particular attributes of the Deity, and still more, those, which

arose from the articles on the creed or the petitions in the Our Father, were below his sublime devotion. His object was to ascend to God alone, and to rest in silent adoration of his divine essence, without hope and without fear.—This gave the quietists a further title to their appellation.

III. A constant spirit of conformity to the divine will, is the duty of every christian, and enters into every virtue ; but, to discover the divine will, and, when it is discovered, to act in conformity to it, requires exertion on our parts, and a correspondence of action with the graces, with which we are favoured.—Inert and inactive, the quietist presented himself to the Deity. A formal petition for good, a formal deprecation of evil was, in his view, a degradation from the general submission which he owed to the divine will, and fell very short of that abandonment of himself to it, which the soul owed to her Creator.

IV. That resignation of the soul, which relies on God's infinite mercy for eternal happiness in the next life, and for as much of the good of this life as is consistent with her sanctification, was beneath the virtue of a quietist. His resignation was to arise to a sublime indifference, both for temporal and eternal things ; he was to look on both, without desire or alarm. Indulging himself in the impossible supposition, that such a sacrifice could be acceptable to God, he offered himself to reprobation in this life, and to eternal punishment

in the next. This indifference to salvation, from a supposed conformity to the will of God, was the highest effort of the virtue of a quietist, and completed his title to his appellation.

V. So strange a sacrifice was to be followed by as strange a reward. Far above an humble hope of eternal bliss, and an humble confidence of present favor, the ordinary happiness of the just in this life, the quietist professed to aspire.—His soul was, even in this life, to assume a new existence, to be transformed into the divine essence, and to be so far individualised with the Deity as to lose the consciousness of her existence separate from him.

VI. Whether we express our admiration or love of God, approach him in prayer, or speak his praise, our language must partake of the imperfections of our nature, and must therefore fall infinitely beneath its subject. Still, we should exert ourselves to use, in all our addresses to the Deity, and in every mention of him, the noblest and purest terms in our power; and not only respect for the awful Being, whom we address, but good sense and taste, point out to us the duty of avoiding, with the greatest care, every expression, in his regard, which in itself is low, or has a tendency to raise a vulgar, a grotesque, or an irregular idea. Expressions of the very lowest kind, and tending to raise the most vulgar, grotesque, and irregular ideas, are to be found, too often, in

the writings of the quietists, and their expressions of divine love are sometimes such, as would better become the strains of an amatory sonneteer.

VII. The looseness of the doctrinal language of quietism was, perhaps, still more blameable. It was difficult to fix on it any meaning ; and, when something of its meaning was discovered, it was necessary to understand it with so much limitation, and in a sense so peculiar to the writings of the quietists, that the obvious import of their phrases had generally little, and sometimes no resemblance with the notions, which they were intended to convey.

Such was the general nature of the charges brought against the quietists. To all of them the quietists pleaded guilty, so far as to allow the facts, on which they were built ; but the consequences drawn from them, the quietists confidently denied. They observed, that ascetic devotion, like every other science, had its appropriate nomenclature, upon which its professors were agreed, and by which, therefore, their doctrines were to be tried and explained. Thus explained, they contended that their doctrines would be found to express the noblest and purest sentiments of divine love. They observed, that the language of the ancient was the same as the language of the modern mystics ; and they suggested that there could be no just reason for withholding from the latter the indulgence which was shewn the former.

These assertions were not wholly destitute of foundation. It is admitted that the quietists themselves always protested against the pernicious consequences imputed to their doctrines. From that circumstance, from the general spirit of piety, which is to be found in many parts of their writings, from the acknowledged purity of their morals, and their regular observance of their religious duties, it has been contended, with some appearance of reason, that their religious system, as it was explained by themselves, was much less reprehensible than, standing singly, it appeared in their own writings ; and from these circumstances it was inferred by many, that their errors lay less in their tenets, than in the language, in which their tenets were expressed.

In this mode of viewing the charge against the quietists, much of it was answered ; but much of it remained to be answered, for which they had no defence.

I. What is only true with an explanation, is untrue without it. The explanation, which the quietists offered, when put on their defence, was either not to be found, or was only faintly discoverable in their writings. Thus, with respect to the generality of readers, their doctrine stood unexplained, and was therefore, on the face of it, chargeable with the errors with which it was reproached.

II. With all the limitations, by which their

writings could be qualified, they could, at most, be useful to very few—to that small number of persons only, whose exalted piety and contemplative habits, enabled them to comprehend and relish such sublime speculations. To persons in the lower ranks of a spiritual life, they would be both unintelligible and prejudicial. Yet, in all their writings, the quietists affected to inculcate, that their doctrine was the only solid foundation of a spiritual life, and that to learn and practise it was the universal duty of christians.

III. The unavoidable tendency of their writings was to draw the faithful from vocal prayer and meditation, the real support of a spiritual life, by exciting them to aim at a state of passive and quiescent devotion, in which, without any other effort on their part, than a recollection of their being under the eye of the Divinity, and an intellectual belief of his presence, they were to expect the pious sentiments, with which he should visit them. Now, when it is considered how very few are capable of preserving a devotional habit of mind, even for a short time, without actual prayer and meditation, and even without the assistance of a book, it may easily be perceived, that the state of passiveness and quiescence recommended by the quietists, immediately tended to a general subversion of all prayer and meditation.

IV. But the most pernicious part of their writings was the language in which they attempted

to express their resignation to the divine will. In the ordinary acceptation of them, their expressions amounted to an absolute indifference to future rewards and punishments, and even to vice and virtue. That this was not their meaning may be conceded ; but it is certain, that, in its common acceptation, the general language of their writings had that import.

CHAP. X.

Madame de Guyon.

THE revival of quietism, in the reign of Lewis the fourteenth, was owing to madame de Guyon, and her finding too warm and powerful a friend in Fenelon.

She was descended from respectable parents, and inherited from them an ample fortune. Beauty, wit, elegance, whatever is most captivating in the female form or the female mind, she is allowed to have possessed in an eminent degree ; and, after a very severe inquiry, her adversaries were forced to confess, that, in every part of her life, her morals were irreproachable ; she married at an early age ; was left, while she was still young, a widow with children, and then, resolving to give herself wholly to devotion, she delivered up her children to their father's family. This exposed her to censure ; but it was admitted that, in the settlement of the

pecuniary concerns of her children, she conducted herself with generosity. Soon after she became a widow, she placed herself under the spiritual direction of father La Combe, a barnabite friar, who had been a disciple of Molinos. Under the impression of his instructions, she framed a system of spirituality, of which the doctrines of Molinos formed the ground-work, and pretended a divine mission to propagate it among the faithful. With that view, she composed two works: her *Short Method of Prayer*, she put into the hands of beginners; her *Torrents*, she presented to the perfect. She travelled over many parts of France, every where made friends and proselytes, and finally arrived in Paris. She was soon admitted to the private parties at the Hotel de Beauvilliers: there, in Fenelon, she found a willing hearer; and, when she descanted before him, on the love, the pure, disinterested love of God, she touched a nerve of exquisite sensibility, which vibrated to his heart.

That she had wit and eloquence is allowed by all her contemporaries; but her writings unquestionably abound with spiritual nonsense. She teaches in them, that the soul, which completely abandons herself to the divine will, reserves, for herself, nothing; not even in death, or life, or perfection, or salvation, or heaven, or hell: that man is so worthless, that it scarcely deserves his own inquiry, whether he is to be eternally saved or eternally lost;

that God sometimes takes from a soul every gift of grace and virtue ; that the duty of a christian soul in this state, is to permit herself to be buried and crushed, to suffer the stench of her death, to leave herself to rot, and to try no means of avoiding her corruption ; that, at length, she becomes insensible of her own stench, and accustoms herself to it, so as to remain at ease in it, without hope of arising out of it : then her inanition commences, and she begins to live to God alone. This should seem a picture of a soul abandoned to disorder, forsaken by God, and hardened in vice ; but is presented by madame de Guyon as a picture of the most perfect virtue. In some part of her writings, she assumes a prophetic character ; she pretends to see clearly the state of souls, to have a miraculous power both over souls and bodies ; she calls herself the corner stone of the cross, rejected by human architects ; she declares that she had attained so lofty a state of perfection, that she should no longer pray to the saints, or even to the mother of God, as it did not become the spouse of Christ to request the prayers of others. On some occasions, her language is so offensive to decency, that her expressions will not bear repeating. In exposing this objectionable part of her writings, Bossuet beautifully apostrophizes the seraphs, and entreats them to bring burning coals from the altar of heaven, to purify his lips, lest they should have been defiled by the impurities, which he had been obliged to mention.

From the Hotel de Beauvilliers, where it was first introduced, quietism rapidly extended over Paris and the provinces : and attracted the notice of the French clergy. They pronounced it a dangerous innovation, chimerical in theory, subversive in practice, of the true spirit of religion, and leading indirectly to a frightful laxity of morals. At first it was relished by madame de Maintenon, but her good sense quickly led her to suspect it ; she advised upon it with many persons of distinguished eminence in the church ; they universally declared against it, and, from that time, she professed herself the enemy both of quietism, and madame de Guyon. Fenelon would not admit the quietism of madame de Guyon, in the odious sense which was given to that word, and generally espoused her cause.

Bossuet, the bishop of Meaux, was at that time the oracle of the French clergy ; and to him, madame de Guyon, when her doctrine became a subject of dispute, addressed herself. He declared immediately against her spirituality ; but, in all his personal intercourse with her, he appears to have conducted himself with condescension and delicacy. So much was she satisfied with him, that she communicated to him all her works, both manuscript and in print. She even put into his hands, a manuscript account of her life ; it is written with vivacity, and, in some parts of it, pleases by its piety ; but it abounds with vanity and enthusiasm.

The late Mr. John Wesley translated it into English: in his preface to it, he says, "Such another life as that of madame de Guyon, I doubt whether the world ever saw.—It contains an abundance of excellent things, uncommonly excellent: several things, which are utterly false and unscriptural; nay, such as are dangerously false.—As to madame de Guyon herself, I believe, she was not only a good woman, but good in an eminent degree; deeply devoted to God, and often favoured with uncommon communications of his spirit."

It is very remarkable that madame de Guyon never showed her manuscript to Fenelon:—Was she more apprehensive of Fenelon's good sense and discernment than of Bossuet's?—After having examined with great attention, the writings which madame de Guyon communicated to him, Bossuet had a personal conference with her; he explained to her what he thought reprehensible in her works, and gave her advice for her conduct. She acquiesced in every thing he suggested; he then said mass, and what, in her circumstances, was very remarkable, administered to her the blessed sacrament with his own hands.

Of these circumstances, Bossuet informed Fenelon, and sent him large extracts which he had made from the writings of madame de Guyon, with remarks on them, and endeavoured to draw from Fenelon a direct condemnation of her doctrine. Fenelon professed the highest deference for his

authority ; he admitted that several passages in the works of madame de Guyon would not bear the rigid examination of scholastic accuracy ; but he contended that they were entitled to a more benign interpretation, and, on that ground, deprecated for them the prelate's severity.

For some time, madame de Guyon lived in the retirement and quiet which Bossuet recommended to her : by degrees she grew tired of her obscurity : and, hearing that reports injurious to her character were in circulation, she applied to madame de Maintenon, to prevail on Lewis the fourteenth to appoint commissioners to inquire into her doctrines and morals. Madame de Maintenon observed, that madame de Guyon's morals had never been seriously accused ; but, as her doctrines had occasioned a considerable degree of ferment in the mind of the public, she thought it a proper subject of examination. On madame de Maintenon's suggestion, Lewis the fourteenth appointed the bishop of Meaux, the bishop of Chartres, and M. Tronson, commissioners for this inquiry. They assembled at Issy, a retired country house, belonging to the congregation of St. Sulpice, of which, it has been mentioned, that M. Tronson was superior.

The conferences were carried on, without much interruption, during six months : the subject was discussed, the authorities examined, and the inferences weighed with great deliberation. Bossuet always admitted that, before these disputes, he was

little conversant with mystical theology, and had read little of the mystical writings of St. Francis of Sales, St. John of the Cross, and other spiritualists of eminence. At his request, Fenelon made extracts from those works for him, and accompanied them with observations, evidently calculated to make Bossuet think favourably of them and of madame de Guyon.

After a full and patient examination of the writings of madame de Guyon, and of the general doctrine of quietism, the conferences at Issy closed. The commissioners drew up thirty articles ; Fenelon was consulted upon them, made some alterations in them, and added to them, four, which were entirely new. In that state, they were signed by the three commissioners, and by Fenelon. They contain no mention of madame de Guyon, or her doctrines ; but profess to express the doctrines of the church on the principal points of dispute on the subject of quietism. They declare that every christian is bound to practise the theological virtues, and make acts of them ; to desire and pray explicitly for his eternal salvation, as a blessing which God wishes to grant him, and enjoins him to desire ; to pray for the remission of his sins, for the blessing of perseverance, for increase of virtue, and for strength to resist temptation ; that it is unlawful to be indifferent to salvation, or to any thing, with which salvation is connected : that these acts of devotion do not derogate from a high

state of perfection ; that faith and the ordinary measure of grace will raise a christian to perfection ; that we should always endeavour to obtain it, without waiting for a particular inspiration ; that acts of faith and hope form a part of the sublimest prayer, as they necessarily enter into charity, which is its foundation : that perpetual prayer does not consist in a perpetual and uninterrupted address to the Deity, but in an occasional prayer, and an habitual disposition and readiness to perform his holy will ; that passive prayer, as it is described and admitted by St. Francis of Sales, and some other approved spiritualists, should not be rejected ; that, without it, persons may be great saints ; that it is a dangerous error to exclude from it, an attention to the particular attributes of the Deity, or to the mysteries of faith, to the passion, the death, or the resurrection of Christ ; that the gift of high prayer is very uncommon, and should always be submitted to the examination of spiritual superiors.

Whatever may have been the errors of madame de Guyon, her docility is entitled to praise. Without any reserve or equivocation, she signed a writing, expressing her acquiescence in the doctrine contained in the articles of Issy. The bishop of Chartres, and afterwards cardinal de Noailles, published a condemnation of her writings ; to each of them she readily subscribed.

It was soon after the breaking up of the conferences at Issy, that Fenelon was nominated to

the archbishopric of Cambray ; every thing respecting quietism then seemed to be set at rest. At his own warm request, Bossuet officiated at the consecration of Fenelon ; and it appears that he was anxious to show to Fenelon this mark of regard.

Quietism, however, continued to gain ground. To stop its progress, Bossuet composed his “ *Instruction sur les etats de l’oraison.*” It was formally approved by the cardinal de Noailles, and the bishop of Chartres ; and Bossuet earnestly wished that it should have the approbation of the new archbishop. This Fenelon declined on two grounds ; he thought it contained an absolute and unqualified denial of the possibility of a pure disinterested love of God, and that its censures of madame de Guyon were too general and too severe.

It seems to be admitted that there was some ground for the first of these objections ; on the second, little can now be said. It appears, however, that Fenelon’s motives for withholding his approbation of the work appeared satisfactory to the cardinal de Noailles, the bishop of Chartres, and madame de Maintenon ; but they required of him immediately to publish some work, in which he should express, in precise and unequivocal terms, his adherence to the doctrine contained in the articles of Issy, and his disapprobation of the doctrine of the quietists.

CHAP. XI.

The Contest of Fenelon and Bossuet, on the Subject of Quietism, particularly on Fenelon's Book "Explication des Maximes des Saints sur la Vie Interieure."

IN performance of his engagements with the cardinal and the bishop of Chartres, and with madame de Maintenon, Fenelon, soon after his consecration, published his celebrated "*Explication des Maximes des Saints sur la Vie Interieure*," the immediate cause of all his woe. It is certain, that, before it was printed, it was examined, with the most severe and scrupulous attention, by the cardinal de Noailles and M. Tronson, and by M. Pirot, a theologian of great eminence in his day, attached to Bossuet, and consulted by him, on his work, "*Sur les etats d'oraison*." All of them pronounced the *Maximes des Saints* a golden work; and cardinal de Noailles said, he had no charge to bring against the author, but his too great docility. It is, however, equally certain, that immediately on its appearance, it was distinctly and loudly condemned by the public voice. In a private letter of Bossuet, he justly remarked, that, at a time when a false mysticism did so much harm, nothing should be written on the subject, but to condemn it, and that the true mystic should be left in peace to God.

Till this stage of the business, Lewis the fourteenth was kept in ignorance of the disputes in question: it was then thought necessary that he should be made acquainted with them. Bossuet fell at his feet, informed him of the fact, and asked "his pardon for not having informed him sooner of the fanaticism of his mitred brother." A less theatrical revelation of the secret, would, perhaps, have been more consonant to the dictates of christian prudence and charity.

To Fenelon, Lewis the fourteenth was never partial. — This circumstance is mentioned both by the duke de St. Simon and the chancellor d'Aguisseau; they observe that Fenelon had a loftiness of genius, of which that monarch felt an awe; and something of an extraordinary elevation of character, which did not accord with the severe simplicity of the royal mind; so that, though Lewis the fourteenth was not insensible to the merits of Fenelon, and had raised him to one of the highest ranks in the Gallican church, he had no personal attachment to him. Hence, when Bossuet disclosed to Lewis the fourteenth, the fanaticism, as he termed it, of Fenelon, there was nothing in the mind of Lewis the fourteenth which pleaded in the archbishop's favour, and the monarch's aversion from all novelties, particularly in matters of religion, argued strongly against him. From madame de Maintenon, who had once been so partial to him, it was natural for Fenelon to

expect more indulgence ; but, at the time of Bossuet's disclosure to Lewis the fourteenth, she was quite alienated from Fenelon. His piety had first recommended him to her ; when that piety appeared to her to be tinctured with quietism, it became odious in her sight. Good sense and severity marked her character, as much as they did the character of Lewis the fourteenth : it was therefore natural for her to view Fenelon's partiality for madame de Guyon, (for such his refusal to censure her writings must have appeared to madame de Maintenon), with disgust. Besides,—a sense of her own preservation would naturally irritate madame de Maintenon greatly against Fenelon, and induce her rather to seek, than avoid occasions of expressing herself to his disadvantage. Lewis the fourteenth's anger with him was very great, and it appears by a letter, of which M. de Bausset gives his readers an extract, that madame de Maintenon was apprehensive of his being seriously displeased with her for keeping Fenelon's conduct so long concealed from him.

Some writers have intimated that madame de Maintenon had a very particular cause of complaint against Fenelon : by their account Lewis the fourteenth consulted Fenelon on the propriety of making public his marriage with madame de Maintenon, and Fenelon advised the monarch against it.—But this story rests on very slight authority ; and M. de Bausset mentions, that, among

Fenelon's papers he did not discover the slightest circumstance in its support, and that it was disbelieved in Fenelon's family. It is, however, certain that, from the time of which we are now speaking, madame de Maintenon's conduct to Fenelon was unfriendly. To restore him to the favour of her sexagenary lover, might not be in her power; but it is difficult to suppose that it was not in her power to save Fenelon from many mortifications, and, in a great measure, to break his fall. If she had this power, she owed to her former friendship for him, to his character, at once so amiable and so respectable, and even to the claims which genius in distress ever has on the powerful and the great, to exert it all for him. But her friendly arm was never stretched out to Fenelon.

It was in her own establishment at St. Cyr, that Lewis the fourteenth's displeasure at Fenelon was first publicly displayed. The monarch repaired to St. Cyr, summoned the whole community before him, dismissed three of the religious, who were supposed to be attached to the opinions of madame de Guyon, declared they should never be readmitted, and expressed the strongest indignation against that lady and all her adherents.

Many attempts were made to bring the dispute to an amicable termination. Explanations were suggested, conferences were proposed; but every thing proved ineffectual. Nothing short of a formal retractation would satisfy Bossuet. He

declared that the maxims of the saint contained some positions which were errors of faith ; others, that led directly to quietism and the most fatal consequences ; some things that were abominable ; and several falsifications of passages in the writings of St. Francis of Sales. Yet he spoke of Fenelon, as an author dear to his heart, who was so used to listen to him, and to whom he was so used to listen. “ God,” says Bossuet, “ in whose presence I write, knows, with what sighs I have raised to him my sorrowful voice, in complaint that a friend of so many years thought me unworthy of treating with him,—me, who never raised my voice more than half a tone against him. I impute it to my sins, that such a friend has failed me, the friend of my life, whom I carry in my heart.” Yet, when the cardinal de Noailles and the bishop of Chartres seemed to relax in favour of Fenelon, “ take your own measures,” Bossuet sternly said to them, “ I will raise my voice to the heavens against those errors, so well known to you ; I will complain to Rome, to the whole earth ; it shall not be said that the cause of God is weakly betrayed ; though I should stand single in it, I will advocate it.” After the affair of quietism was over, Lewis the fourteenth asked Bossuet, how he would have acted, if he had not met with the royal support : “ I should have raised my voice still higher than I did,” answered Bossuet.

The storm continually increasing, Fenelon

determined to carry the cause to Rome. For this he requested the monarch's permission, and it was immediately granted. Lewis wrote, with his own hand, to the pope, a letter, penned by Bossuet. It denounced to the pope the *Maxims of the Saints*, as "a very bad and very dangerous work; condemned by bishops, by many doctors, and a multitude of learned religious men; that the explanations offered by the archbishop could not be supported." The monarch concluded by "assuring the pope, that he would use all his authority to cause the decision of the holy see to be carried into execution." This certainly was not the tone of moderation and impartiality, with which the cause ought to have been presented to the holy see. A few days after the letter was written, the cardinal de Noailles, Bossuet, and the bishop of Chartres, signed a formal condemnation of the *Maxims of the Saints*, and delivered it into the hands of M. Delphini, the pope's nuncio. It was penned by Bossuet, and is expressed with great moderation; but it was greatly softened by the cardinal de Noailles and the bishop of Chartres, after it came from the hands of Bossuet.—It should, however, be remarked, that it mentions as an expression of Fenelon's "the involuntary emotion of Jesus Christ on the Cross." Now, both before and after the bishops had signed this instrument, Fenelon uniformly declared that the expression had been interpolated by the printer's mistake.—After

such a declaration, the expression should not have been noticed; or, if it were noticed, the archbishop's declaration should have been noticed equally.

Fenelon applied to Lewis the fourteenth for his permission to go to Rome, under any restrictions his majesty should think proper. This, the monarch absolutely refused, but permitted him to send agents to Rome, to act for him. He ordered Fenelon to proceed immediately to his diocese, to remain there, and not to stop at Paris longer than his affairs made his stay absolutely necessary. Immediately on receiving this letter, Fenelon wrote to madame de Maintenon, and in his letter, expressed, in short and unaffected language, his concern at his having incurred the displeasure of her and the king, his obedience to his majesty, and his future submission to the sentence of the holy see. Madame de Maintenon was so much affected by Fenelon's letter as to be seriously ill. Lewis reproached her with it; "we are then," he said, "to see you die by inches, for this foolish affair." In passing through Paris, Fenelon stopped before the seminary of St. Sulpice, where he had spent his early, and probably, his happiest hours: but he forbore from entering the house, lest his shewing a regard for it, might expose its inhabitants to his majesty's displeasure. From Paris, he proceeded straight to Cambray.

The agent whom he employed at Rome was the abbé de Chantérac, a relation, with whom he had

long been united in the closest friendship, and with whom he had long lived in the habit of the most confidential communication. The abbé possessed every quality, which could recommend him, on this occasion, to Fenelon. His probity and piety were exemplary ; his mode of thinking and acting were mild ; he spoke and wrote the Latin and Italian languages with ease and elegance ; the subject of the controversy, and every thing, which had passed in respect to it, were familiar to him ; he was intimately acquainted with Fenelon's notions and views, and had the most sincere affection and veneration for him. " My dear friend," Fenelon said in the instructions which he gave him for his conduct at Rome, " consider God alone, in the unhappy business. I often say with Mardocheus, O Lord ! every thing is known to thee ; thou knowest that, what I have done, is not through pride, through contempt of others, or the secret desire of glory. When God shall manifest his pleasure, we too should be pleased ; whatever may be the humiliation he sends us."

Bossuet's agents, were the abbé Bossuet, his nephew, and the abbé de Phillippeaux ; both of them had learning and talents, both were attached to Bossuet : but both inclined to violent councils ; the friends of Bossuet have laid to their charge the intemperate spirit, which too often, in the course of the controversy, was shewn by Bossuet.

Lewis the fourteenth removed Fenelon from his

office of preceptor to the duke of Burgundy, the duke of Anjou, and the duke of Berri, but permitted him to retain the title of their preceptor. His displeasure with Fenelon extended to his relations and friends: the frown of the court was shewn to them all; but, to the eternal honour of them all, it appears that, in spite of the monarch's frown, every friend of Fenelon continued attached to him. The duke de Beauvilliers proclaimed publicly his friendship for him: Lewis the fourteenth reproached the duke with it, and intimated to him, that it might be the cause of his own disgrace. "I will remember," the duke replied, "that Fenelon was appointed preceptor to the duke of Burgundy upon my recommendation; I shall never repent of it. Fenelon always has been, and is now more than ever, my friend. I know I am the work of your majesty's hand: you raised me, you may throw me down. If this should happen, I shall recognize, in what befalls me, the will of the Almighty. I shall retire, with sincere regret at having displeased your majesty; not, however, without the hope of leading a more quiet life than a court allows." On some occasion, a compromise was suggested, which, if it had been accepted, would have hushed the question, and of course removed the duke from danger; the duke would not even hear of it, and desired it might not be mentioned to Fenelon.

But, among the friends of Fenelon none was

more constant than his royal pupil, the duke of Burgundy. The instant he heard of Fenelon's banishment, he ran to his grandfather, flung himself at his feet, implored, with tears, his clemency, and, as a proof of the purity of Fenelon's doctrine, appealed to what his own conduct would ever be. Lewis was affected with the noble conduct of his grandson ; when he recovered himself, he told him that, what he solicited was not a matter of favour : that the purity of faith was at stake, " and of that," he said, " Bossuet is the best judge." The duke retired in silence : how he felt and how he conducted himself afterwards in respect to Fenelon, will be mentioned in a future page of this work : the preceptor and pupil were worthy of each other.

After the cardinal de Noailles, the bishop of Chartres, and Bossuet had published their condemnation of the *Maxims of the Saints*, the two former almost quitted the war, and left the field to Bossuet and Fenelon. " Then," to use the words of the chancellor, d'Aguesseau, " were seen to enter the lists, two combatants, rather equal than alike. One of them of consummate skill, covered with the laurels which he had gained in his combats for the church, an indefatigable warrior ; his age and repeated victories might have dispensed him from further service, but his mind, still vigorous, and superior to the weight of his years, preserved, in his old age, a great portion of his early fire. The other, in the full strength of youth, not

yet much known by his writings, but enjoying the highest reputation for his eloquence and the loftiness of his genius : long exercised in the subject of discussion, a perfect master of its language : nothing in it was above his comprehension, nothing in it which he could not explain, and every thing he explained appeared plausible. Before they became rivals, they had long been friends ; both were estimable for the purity of their morals ; amiable for the softness of their manners ; ornaments of the church, of the court, and of human nature : one was respected as the sun setting in full majesty ; the other, as the sun, who promised to fill the universe with his glory, if he could but disengage himself from a kind of eclipse in which he was unhappily involved."

It is admitted that the tenets objected by Bossuet to Fenelon may be reduced to two :

1st, That a person may attain an habitual state of divine love, in which he loves God, purely for his sake, and without the slightest regard to his own interests, even in respect to his eternal happiness. This was said to elevate charity beyond human power, at the expence of the fear of God, and the hope of divine favour.

2dly, That, in such a state, it is lawful, and may even be considered as an heroic effort of conformity to the Divine will, to consent to eternal reprobation, if God should require such a sacrifice ; the party

who makes such an act, conceiving at the moment that such a sacrifice is possible.

It was also objected to Fenelon, that he refused to subscribe to the condemnation of madame de Guyon, in whose writings these propositions were expressed in the boldest terms; who maintained the possibility of a permanent state of divine love, depending only on faith, and a kind of intellectual view of the Deity, from which prayer and every other devotional effort was absent, and even kept away; who confounded a holy resignation to the divine will, with indifference to salvation; whose works abounded with expressions on the love of God, offensive to good sense and delicacy; with ridiculous and impossible suppositions, and monstrous and disgusting errors. These were the charges brought by Bossuet against Fenelon, with subsidiary charges of inconsistency, duplicity, falsification, subterfuge, and other similar accusations. Fenelon retorted on Bossuet, that, by denying the pure love of God, he elevated the hope and fear of God at the expence of charity, and that his censures of madame de Guyon were too general, and immoderately severe.

During this memorable controversy Bossuet and Fenelon repeatedly issued from the press in the way of attack and defence. It is admitted that, in these publications, each exerted his utmost talents: that no work of either is more highly

finished : that each shews in his writings, a conscious dignity of character ; each cautiously abstains from vulgar abuse, but that each exerts every power and artifice of composition to excite the resentment of his reader against his adversary. Had such works been written, on any subject of a general and permanent interest, they would now be found, with the Introduction to Universal History, and with Telemachus, in every library and on many a toilet : but, from the perishable nature of the subject, after a momentary celebrity, they sunk into oblivion, and are now read by those only who anxiously labour to acquire the highest polish of the French language.

Sure of the active support of his sovereign, and confiding, as he certainly might very far, in the justice of his cause, Bossuet appears to have expected that the court of Rome would have proceeded almost immediately to the condemnation of the accused book. With this impression, Bossuet's instructions to his agents were, to avoid the slightest intimation, that the condemnation of it, " would be attended with the least difficulty ; that, in whatever manner the sentence of condemnation should be pronounced, it would meet with no resistance." They were to represent, that " Fenelon, in his own diocese, was considered an heretic ; and that, as soon as Rome should speak, Cambray and all the Low Countries would rise against him." But the

court of Rome was too wise to proceed with such precipitancy. For some time, the pope took no other step in the business, than to consult with his confidential advisers on the best method of proceeding in it. He then appointed a commission, composed of the persons in Rome most distinguished for learning and piety; they were directed to extract, from the book, such propositions as appeared to them reprehensible. Several propositions, which appeared to them of that description, they extracted; and they referred them to the pope himself, stating, at length, their reasons for supposing them erroneous. By the pope's orders, they were transmitted to the agents of Bossuet and Fenelon, for their observations; and, when those were returned, all the papers were again laid before the pope, and, both in public and private consistories, repeatedly discussed in his presence. The pope permitted nothing of his sentiments to transpire, except that he thought the matter submitted to him was important and full of difficulty. Both Bossuet and his royal master were surprised and mortified at this delay. At the instigation of Bossuet, the monarch expressed his impatience of it to the nuncio, and the nuncio described it strongly to the pope. His holiness desired him to observe to the king, that, "as the three bishops had become accusers of Fenelon, and had given the greatest publicity to their charge against him, every

rule of justice, and the practice of every judicial court required, that Fenelon should be fully heard in his defence."

For a time, the king seemed willing to leave the matter to its course ; but Bossuet intimated to him, that it was essential to his glory and the good of the church, that the sentence of Rome should be accelerated. He composed, in the name of Lewis, a memorial, stating succinctly the arguments used against Fenelon, and urging his speedy condemnation. Lewis with his own hand, delivered this memorial to the nuncio. Some time after, Lewis dismissed the abbé de Beaumont, and the abbé de Langéron ; both of whom were the confidential friends, and the former of whom was the nephew of Fenelon, from their situation of sub-preceptors to the royal dukes : all Fenelon's other relations, and several of his friends, were forbidden the court. The abbé Bossuet and the abbé Phillippeaux heard this with a transport of joy, and earnestly recommended that the proscription might be extended to father le Chaise, father Valois, and some other religious persons about the court ; " they wish all possible evil," writes the abbé Bossuet to his uncle, " to the king, to madame de Maintenon, to the archbishop of Paris, and to yourself."

Under all these indignities Fenelon preserved the pious serenity of his mind. " Yet but a little while," he says in one of his letters, " and the deceitful dream of this life will be over. We shall

meet in the kingdom of truth, where there is no error, no division, no scandal; we shall breathe the pure love of God; he will communicate to us his everlasting peace. In the mean while, let us suffer, let us suffer; let us be trodden under foot; let us not refuse disgrace; Jesus Christ was disgraced for us: may our disgrace tend to his glory.”

We have seen that Lewis the fourteenth had permitted Fenelon to retain the title of preceptor to the royal dukes; even that slight indulgence was now withdrawn from him; Lewis ordered the list of the officers about their persons to be presented to him, and, with his own hand, drew a line over the name of Fenelon.

The pens both of Fenelon and Bossuet were soon put into action: a pastoral instruction of cardinal de Noailles was the signal for war; Fenelon, in answer to it, addressed four letters to the cardinal; five or six different works were sent to the press by Bossuet: all his controversial talents and eloquence are displayed in them. Fenelon replied to them: by the talents which he displayed in his replies, he fairly balanced his rival's character as a writer, and, by their apparent candour and simplicity, won over every heart to his cause. “How painful is it to me,” he says to Bossuet, “to carry on, against you, this combat of words! and that, to defend myself against your terrible charges, it should be necessary for me to point out your

misrepresentations of my doctrine ? I am the writer so dear to you, whom you always carry in your heart ! yet you endeavour to plunge me, as another Molinos, into the gulph of quietism. Every where you weep over my misfortunes, and, while you weep, you tear me into pieces. What can be thought of tears, to which recourse is only had, when crimination is to be aggravated ! You weep on my account, and you suppress what is essential in my writings : you join together sentences in them which are wide asunder. Your own exaggerated consequences, formally contradicted in my text, you hold out as my principles ! What is most pure in my text, becomes blasphemy in your representation of it ! Believe me, we are too long a spectacle to the world ; an object of derision to the ungodly ; of compassion to the good. That other men should be men, is not surprising ; but that the ministers of Jesus Christ, the angels of the church, should exhibit such scenes to the profane and the unbeliever, calls for tears of blood. How much more fortunate would have been our lot, if, instead of thus consuming our time in interminable disputes, we had been employed in our dioceses, in teaching the catechism, in instructing the villager to fear God, and bless his holy name."

Bossuet now saw, with surprise, that Fenelon met him with equal arms, and that, if the public opinion did not yet consider Fenelon to be wholly.

innocent, it considered him to be cruelly persecuted, and Bossuet to be his persecutor. Besides, it had transpired, that in the consistories at Rome, many voices had declared in favour of Fenelon.

Another battery was now opened against the archbishop: an attempt was made to revive the stories, often propagated but fully disproved, of the too great familiarities of madame de Guyon with father La Combe. At this time father La Combe had been a prisoner, during ten years, in the chateau de Lourds, at the foot of the Pyrennees. To have him more under its command, the court caused him to be transferred to the chateau de St. Vincennes: there, he was prevailed upon to write to madame de Guyon a letter, exhorting her to acknowledge and repent of their intercourse. It was expected, that the ascertainment of this fact, would indirectly operate to the detriment of Fenelon, by exposing his connection with that lady to a similar suspicion. So much importance was annexed to this circumstance that cardinal de Noailles himself, with the curé de St. Sulpice, took the letter to madame de Guyon, and pressed her, in the most solemn and moving terms, to confess the fault. She heard them with surprise, coolly asserted her innocence, and declared, that father La Combe must have been mad when he wrote such a letter. The accusation, however, was believed by the cardinal and by Bossuet. The latter forwarded it to his nephew at Rome: "It is

better than twenty theological demonstrations," was the nephew's answer on receiving it. " These are the arguments we most need." But the whole of this wretched manœuvre ended in nothing : it was soon discovered that father La Combe's intellects were wholly deranged ; he was removed to Charenton, and died in the course of the following year, in a state of complete insanity. Still the stories of Fenelon's supposed habits with madame de Guyon were kept alive : " It is asserted here," the abbé de Chantèrac writes to him, " that you followed madame de Guyon equally in her disorders, as in her errors. To impress this on the mind of the public, every new courier is said to bring new confessions of the woman, and fresh discoveries of her abominations. It is asserted that your adversaries are in possession of the originals of several of your letters to her, which, however, to save your reputation, are not to be produced till the last extremity." It was in this stage of the business, that Fenelon's friends were dismissed the court. When the abbé de Chantèrac informed the pope of this circumstance, his holiness was greatly affected ; he repeated to himself with great emotion : " expulerunt nepotem, expulerunt consanguineos, expulerunt amicos," they have put out of doors his nephew, his relations, his friends !

In spite of the odious measures we have mentioned, in spite of the logic and eloquence of Bossuet, the public favour began to manifest itself

more strongly for Fenelon, and it hourly became more and more uncertain, which would ultimately prove victorious, Bossuet, aided by the favour of the sovereign, or Fenelon, who had nothing to oppose him, but the exquisite beauty of his genius, and the reputation of his virtue.

At this critical moment, Bossuet published his celebrated Relation of Quietism. In composing it, he availed himself of some secret and confidential writings which he had received from madame de Guyon, of private letters written to him by Fenelon, during their early intimacy, and of a letter, which, under the seal of friendship, Fenelon had written to madame de Maintenon, and which, in this trying hour, she unfeelingly communicated to Bossuet. The substance of these different pieces, Bossuet connected with so much art, interwove in them the mention of so many curious facts, so entertaining an account of madame de Guyon's visions and pretensions to inspiration, and so many interesting anecdotes of the conduct of Lewis the fourteenth, and madame de Maintenon during the controversy; he occasionally inserted in it, so much dignified and truly episcopal eloquence, he deplored so feelingly the errors of Fenelon, presented his own conduct, during their disputes, in so favourable a view, and put the whole together with such exquisite skill, expressed it with so much elegance, and set it off by such brilliancy of thought and expression, as excited universal admiration, and

attracted universal favour to its author. In one part of it, he assumed a style of mystery, and announced, “that the time was come, when it was the Almighty’s will, that the secrets of the union should be revealed.”—A terrible revelation was then expected, it seemed to appal every heart: it seemed that the existence of virtue itself would become problematical, if it should be proved that Fenelon was not virtuous.

A letter of madame de Maintenon shews the eagerness with which the extraordinary performance of Bossuet was read; “they talk here of nothing else; they lend it, they snatch it from one another, they devour it:” she herself circulated copies of it every where. Nothing could exceed the consternation, which this raised among the friends of Fenelon, at Rome, and at Paris:—His first intention was not to answer it; but the abbé de Chantérac informed him, that the impression, which it made against him at Rome was so strong, that a full refutation of it was absolutely necessary. He therefore determined to reply. Bossuet’s relation appeared in the middle of June, Fenelon’s reply was published on the third of August.

A nobler effusion of the indignation of insulted virtue and genius, eloquence has never produced. In the first lines of it Fenelon placed himself above his antagonist, and to the last preserves his elevation. “Notwithstanding my innocence,” says Fenelon, “I was always apprehensive of a dispute

of facts; I knew that such a dispute between bishops must occasion considerable scandal. If, as the bishop of Meaux has a hundred times asserted, my book be full of the most extravagant contradictions, and the most monstrous errors, why does he have recourse to discussions, which must be attended with the most terrible of all scandals? why does he reveal to libertines what he terms a woeful mystery, a prodigy of seduction? why, when the propriety of censuring my book is the sole question, does he travel out of its text? but the bishop of Meaux begins to find it difficult to establish his accusations of my doctrine; the history of madame de Guyon then comes to his aid, and he lays hold of it as an amusing tale, likely to make all his mistakes of my doctrine disappear and be forgotten. Thus, when he can no longer argue the point of doctrine, he attacks me personally; he publishes on the house-top what before he only ventured to whisper: he has recourse to all that is most odious in human society. The secret of private letters written in intimate and religious confidence, (the most sacred after that of confession), has nothing inviolable in him. He produces my letters to Rome; he prints letters which I writ to him in the strictest confidence.—But all will be useless to him; he will find that nothing that is dishonourable ever proves serviceable.” He then takes up Bossuet’s insinuations respecting madame de Guyon; he produces the very honourable

testimonies of the bishop of Geneva, both in respect to her piety and her morals, under which she was first introduced to him. He observes to Bossuet, that, after the long examination he had made of her doctrine, he permitted her to frequent the sacraments habitually, and even allowed her to state, in the declaration which he made her sign, that it had always been her wish to write in the most orthodox sense, and that she never thought it was possible to give her words any other meaning. "Now," continues Fenelon, "if the bishop of Meaux, who had a full knowledge of madame de Guyon's most secret manuscripts, of those very manuscripts, from which, in his relation, he has given such remarkable extracts, with a view of representing her as infected with the most extravagant and dangerous principles; if, in the full possession of these documents, he still thought her intentions good, might not I, to whom all these manuscripts, all these visions, all these pretended miracles were altogether unknown, be allowed to entertain that private opinion in favour of madame de Guyon's intentions, which Bossuet, in a public instrument, admitted to be presumable?" This positive assertion by Fenelon, of his absolute ignorance of madame de Guyon's manuscripts, is of the utmost importance to his character, as it necessarily goes very far in excusing his refusal of subscribing to Bossuet's condemnation of her. It is to be ob-

served, that, throughout the controversy, the truth of this assertion was never questioned.

Bossuet, in his relation of quietism, exclaimed, "May I venture to say it? Yes, I can say it confidently, and in the face of the sun. Could I, the most simple of mortals, the most incapable of artifice and dissimulation; could I, single and unaided, from the solitude of my cabinet, buried in papers and books, by imperceptible springs, put all the court, all Paris, all the kingdom, all Europe, Rome itself into action, to ruin merely by the strength of my own personal credit the archbishop of Cambray?" In answer to this animated figure, Fenelon cites a passage on which Bossuet deplores the general seduction in Fenelon's favour. "You lament then," says Fenelon, "the sudden and universal seduction in my favour! Permit me to avail myself against you of your own vivid expressions. Could I, in exile at Cambray, from the solitude of my cabinet, by imperceptible springs, attach to me so many disinterested and impartial persons, who, before they read my replies to you, were so prejudiced against me? Could I in exile, I contradicted, I overwhelmed on all sides, could I do that for my writings, which the bishop of Meaux, in credit, in power, with so many means of making himself dreaded, could not do against them? The bishop of Meaux complains that cabals and factions are in motion; that passion and interest divide the world.

Be it so ! But what interest can any person have to stir in my cause ? I stand single, and am wholly destitute of human help ; no one, that has a view to his interest, dares look upon me. Great bodies, great powers, says the bishop, are in motion ; but, where are the great bodies, the great powers that stand up for me ? These are the excuses the bishop of Meaux gives, for the world's appearing to be divided on his charges against my doctrine, which at first, he represented to be so completely abominable, as to admit of no fair explanation. This division, in the public opinion, on a matter which he represented to be so clear, makes him feel it advisable to shift the subject of dispute from a question of doctrine to a personal charge."

Fenelon thus concludes :—" If the bishop of Meaux has any further writing, any further evidence to produce against me, I conjure him not to do it by halves. Such a proceeding is worse than any publication ; I conjure him to forward it instantly to Rome. I fear nothing, thank God, that will be communicated and examined judicially ; I fear nothing but vague report and unexamined allegation."

" I cannot here forbear from calling to witness the adorable Being whose eye pierces the thickest darkness, and before whom we must all appear ; he reads my heart ; he knows that I adhere to no person, and to no book ; that I am attached to him alone, and to his church ; that incessantly, in his

holy presence, I beseech him, with sighs and tears, to restore peace to his church, and shorten the days of scandal; to bring back the shepherds to their flocks; to reunite all in his holy mansion, and bestow on the bishop of Meaux as many blessings as the bishop of Meaux has thrown crosses on me."

Never did virtue and genius obtain a more complete triumph. Fenelon's reply, by a kind of enchantment, restored to him every heart. Crushed by the strong arm of power, abandoned by the multitude, there was nothing to which he could look but his own powers. Obligated to fight for his honour, it was necessary for him, if he did not consent to sink under the accusation, to assume a port still more imposing than that of his mighty antagonist. Much had been expected from him, but none had supposed that he would raise himself to so prodigious a height as would not only repel the attack of his antagonist, but actually reduce him to the defensive.

Bossuet published remarks on Fenelon's reply; Fenelon published an answer to these, which, on the question of facts, fixed the public in his favour.

"What an indecency," says Fenelon, "it is to behold in the house of God, in his very sanctuary, his principal ministers unceasingly venting on each other, vague declamations which prove nothing. Your age, and my infirmities, must make us soon appear before Him, whom credit cannot influence, eloquence cannot seduce. You profess to be afraid

of my power, to fear my subtilty. To what are you reduced? You are under a necessity of proving seriously that I have more power than you! what cannot your subtilty prove if it can prove a fact so contrary to what is known to the whole world?"

In one of his works, Bossuet has compared Fenelon and madame de Guyon to the heretic Montanus and his prophetess Priscilla. Fenelon exclaimed against the odiousness of the comparison: Bossuet, in his justification, alleged that a criminal intercourse between Montanus and Priscilla had never been suspected; that it was a mere commerce of mental illusion, like that of Fenelon and madame de Guyon.—“But,” says Fenelon, “does my illusion, such even as you represent it, resemble that of Montanus? That fanatic had detached from their husbands two wives, who followed him every where; he delivered them up to a false spirit of prophecy, he was himself possessed by it, and all three in a transport of diabolical fury strangled themselves. Such was the man, the horror of all succeeding times, to whom you compare me; me, the dear friend of your life, whom you carry in your heart. You say, I have no right to complain of the comparison. No, my lord bishop, I do not complain: I grieve for you—for you, who can coolly say you accuse me of nothing, when you compare me to Montanus! Who now believes what you say? You have done for me more than I could have done for myself. But what a wretched com-

fort is this, when I see the scandal it brings into the house of God ; what a triumph your disgrace is to heretics and libertines.”

“ The scandal was not so great,” says the chancellor d’Aguesseau, “ while these great antagonists confined their quarrel to points of doctrine : but the scene was truly afflicting to all good men when they attacked one another on facts, and differed so much in their accounts, that, as it was impossible that both should speak the truth, persons saw with concern, but saw with certainty, that one of the two prelates must be guilty of untruth. Without saying on which side the truth lay, it is certain that the archbishop of Cambray contrived to obtain, in the opinion of the public, the advantage of probability :—*sut se donner, dans l’esprit du public, l’avantage de la vraisemblance.*” From this time the question of facts was abandoned.

The apologies of Fenelon did not produce a less effect at Rome, than they did at Paris ; and his friends, to use their own words, experienced the same joy, as if, having seen him for a long time struggling with the waves, and finally sinking under them, they beheld him regain the shore in safety. The happiness of the abbé de Chantèrac was perfect : “ When I saw,” he writes to Fenelon, “ your innocence on the point of being overwhelmed in consequence of your repugnance to answer the unjust charges brought against you, and that your silence put the doctrine of the church in danger of

being confounded with the most gross errors, I own to you that my soul was often sorrowful, and that as I sate under the juniper branches I could not always keep my sorrows within bound. ‘Cum sederet subter juniperum, petevit animæ suæ ut moreretur.’ (III. Lib. Reg. cap. 19.) But now, when the truth is known, and you have done all that depended on you to clear it up and defend it, whatever may happen will so clearly appear to be the will of God, in our regard, that I shall not venture to complain of it to him, or even to be afflicted at it. I shall quietly submit myself to his holy will.”

The pope and cardinals received Fenelon’s apology from the abbé in the most affectionate manner : all of them expressed themselves satisfied with it ; the abbé mentions that, when they found how completely Fenelon vindicated his innocence, they seemed to him to feel themselves eased of a weight which oppressed them.

The mortification of the abbé Bossuet was equal to their joy. “Fenelon,” he writes to the bishop of Meaux, “is a wild beast, to be hunted down for the honour of the mitre and of truth, till he is quite subdued and rendered incapable of doing further mischief. Did not St. Augustin pursue Julian even to death? It is necessary to deliver the church from the greatest enemy she ever had. It is my opinion that neither the bishops, nor the

king, can, in conscience, allow any rest to the archbishop of Cambray.”

In the course of the discussion, it was frequently suggested to Fenelon, that he might make a useful diversion in his favour, by retorting on Bossuet, that the expressions which Bossuet used in combating disinterested love, went as far to the ruin of charity as the language of Fenelon, in the support of disinterested love, went to the ruin of hope ; but those suggestions were rejected by Fenelon : “ there might,” he said, “ be prudence in such a measure ; but let me live and die in simplicity.”

It is necessary to mention a circumstance in the controversy, which gave particular scandal. In the days of their intimacy Fenelon had communicated, in writing, to Bossuet, the cardinal de Noailles, and M. Tronson, an account of the most secret dispositions of his conscience. Among them, it was called his confession. Alluding to it, Fenelon, in the course of the controversy, accused Bossuet of revealing his confession. Bossuet held out this to the public as a charge of having betrayed Fenelon’s sacramental confession. Such a disclosure is justly considered, among roman catholics, as a crime of the blackest die. In roman catholic countries it is punishable with death, and none but a villain, in whom every sentiment of religion, virtue, and honour is lost, is supposed capable of it. Bossuet’s representation of this fact raised a storm of

indignation against Fenelon ; but it was immediately explained by him to the satisfaction of the public, and Bossuet never returned to the charge : but the language in which Fenelon made the charge, was very blameable. The public at large was wholly ignorant of the circumstance which explained it, and could not therefore but suppose that Bossuet stood accused by Fenelon of revealing his sacramental confession.

CHAP. XII.

*The Pope's Condemnation of Fenelon's
"Maxims of the Saints."*

A. D. 1699. ÆT. 48.

STILL the proceedings at Rome lingered : the pope had begun by appointing twelve consultors, who were to hold their meetings in the chamber of the master of the Sacred Palace ; they held twelve meetings, and finally, were divided in their opinions. The pope then appointed a congregation of cardinals ; they met, in consultation, twelve times without coming to any resolution : he then appointed a new congregation of cardinals ; these met in consultation fifty-two times, and at length extracted from Fenelon's work, several censurable propositions, and reported them to the pope : after which, they had thirty-seven meetings to settle the form of the censure. During all this time, private

conferences on the subject were continually held by the pope's direction, and sometimes in his presence.

Lewis the fourteenth's impatience at the delay was now shown in a marked manner. He wrote to the pope in strong terms : he states in his letter to his holiness, that, " while he expected from his zeal and friendship a speedy decision on the archbishop's book, he could not bear, without sorrow, that the sentence so necessary to the peace of the church, was delayed by the artifices of those, to whose interest the delay was of advantage." He entreats his holiness, in the most pressing terms, to pronounce sentence immediately. He accompanied his letter with one to the cardinal de Bouillon, his ambassador at Rome, making him responsible for the event.

It was evident that the pope sought to avoid a final decision : the height of the subject, almost always above reason, made it difficult to express an opinion upon it, in such terms, as should be both intelligible and exact ; and it was difficult to censure any of Fenelon's propositions, without censuring a proposition of a similar sound, in the writings of some writer, of whom the roman catholic church thinks with respect. Besides,—though Fenelon always declared his determination to submit implicitly to the judgment of the roman see, and much docility might be expected from him, it was felt that such an act of submission was an effort of

heroic humility, almost beyond the power of human nature, and therefore not to be assumed for granted. If Fenelon should not submit, there was a powerful party, and, at a time not very distant, there might be a powerful monarch, who would espouse his cause, and this might bring fresh troubles into the church, already too much agitated by the disciples of Jansenius. It was also observed to the pope, that, in many respects, it was merely a dispute of words. On the habitual state of disinterested divine love, the attainment of which was said to be inculcated in Fenelon's writings, Fenelon himself uniformly declared his opinion that a permanent state of divine love, without hope and without fear, was above the lot of man ; and Bossuet himself allowed that there might be moments, when a soul, dedicated to the love of God, would be lost in heavenly contemplation, and might love and adore without being influenced either by hope or fear, or being sensible of either. As to the sacrifice of eternal bliss, an offer of which, Fenelon was said to consider as the ultimate effort of heroic resignation to the divine will, Fenelon assimilated it to the wish of Moses, to be blotted from the book of life, (Ex. c. 32. v. 32, 33, 34.), and to the wish of St. Paul, (Rom. c. 9. v. 3.) to be an anathema, for the sake of those for whom they interceded. Bossuet justly contended, that both the patriarch and the apostle were to be understood, with an implied supposition, that the sacrifice which they offered to

God was consonant to his will, and might tend to his glory. This was admitted by Fenelon ; but he contended that the similar expressions of modern mystics should receive a similar construction. As to the strange comparisons, the extravagant suppositions, and the language of fondness used by madame de Guyon and other mystics in expressing their love of God, and their communion with him, which were reprobated in the harshest terms by Bossuet, Fenelon admitted that they could not be censured too severely, if it were just to construe them strictly ; but he contended that theological precision could not be required, with justice, from such writers ; and that these expressions should be treated, merely as effusions of pure and fervent minds, who, feeling nothing wrong in themselves, suspected nothing wrong in others : and, as to the charge of advocating the cause of madame de Guyon ; Fenelon expressly declared his readiness to desist from any defence of her, and even from mentioning her name ; he allowed that her writings were in some respects justly censurable ; but he alleged, that much was imputed to her, of which she was not guilty ; that her real errors were greatly exaggerated, and, on that account he avowed an unwillingness to subscribe to a general **censure** either of her conduct or her writings.

With these explanations, the real difference between Bossuet and Fenelon was not very great ; and perhaps rather to be felt than very accurately

defined or described. On this ground, it was suggested to the pope, that, without pronouncing a formal decision on the points in contest, it would be prudent in him, to be satisfied with issuing a brief, in which the general doctrine of the church should be accurately propounded, and both parties required to abstain from future discussions. It appears that the pope himself inclined to this plan ; but, unfortunately for Fenelon, Lewis the fourteenth had made himself a party in the cause, and Lewis the fourteenth was too powerful a suitor to be denied justice. In spite even of this circumstance, the final decision of the cause was repeatedly postponed, and the papal balance remained steady for a period of time, which the adversaries of Fenelon thought very long. At last it trembled, with a slight preponderance, against Fenelon.—The pope issued a brief, by which twenty-three propositions, reduceable to the two we have mentioned, were extracted from the obnoxious work, and condemned : but the expressions used in the condemnation of them were gentle ; the propositions were said to be condemned because they might insensibly lead the faithful to errors already condemned by the catholic church ; and because they contained propositions, which, in that sense of the words which immediately presented itself, and according to the order and connections of the sentiments, were rash, scandalous, ill-sounding, offensive to pious ears, pernicious in practice, and

erroneous ; but none of them was said to be heretical, and the name of Fenelon, as the author of them, was not once mentioned in the brief. These circumstances soothed the sorrow of the friends of Fenelon, and considerably mortified his adversaries. Their mortification was increased by an expression of the pope, which was soon in every mouth, that Fenelon was in fault for too great love of God ; and his enemies equally in fault, for too little love of their neighbour.

“ Now is the time arrived,” wrote the good abbé de Chantérac to the archbishop, “ to put in practice whatever religion has taught you to be most holy, in a perfect conformity to the will of God. You, and all attached to you, must be obedient to Jesus Christ, to death, even to the death of the cross. You will want all your piety, all the submission which you have so often promised the pope in your letters, to possess your soul in patience, when you read the brief, which he has just published against your book.—It was intimated to me, that I ought to wait upon him, to assure him of your submission.—All of us together cannot be so much affected, as he appears to be, for what may be painful to you in his brief,—most pious, most holy, most learned ;—were epithets he often applied to you. All your friends here think you should receive this brief with the most perfect submission ; and that the more simple your submission shall be, the more acceptable it will be to God and man.

Jesus Christ agonized on the cross, exposed to the judgments of men, appears to me the true model which religion now holds out for your imitation, and to which the Holy Ghost wishes you to conform. It is chiefly in situations like that, in which providence has now placed you, that the just man lives by faith, and that we ought to be founded and rooted in the charity of Jesus Christ. Who shall separate us from it? Never was I so intimately united to you for eternity."

The first information of the pope's brief was conveyed by Fenelon's brother to him at the moment he ascended the pulpit of his cathedral to preach; and the news of it was immediately circulated through the congregation. Fenelon recollected himself, paused for a few minutes, and then, changing the plan of his sermon, preached on the duty of obedience to the church. The subject of his discourse, the sentiments it expressed, the religious calm, with which it was delivered, the solemn engagement he contracted by it to practise, on that trying occasion, the submission which he preached, drew tears of sorrow, respect, and admiration from the whole audience.

The first moment it was in his power, Fenelon published a pastoral letter, addressed to all the faithful of his district:—"Our holy father," he says in it, "has condemned my book, intitled the 'Maxims of the Saints,' and has condemned, in a particular manner, twenty-three propositions ex-

tracted from it. We adhere to his brief, and condemn the book, and the twenty-three propositions, simply, absolutely, and without a shadow of reserve." He sent his pastoral letter to the pope, and solemnly assured his holiness, that he would never attempt to elude his sentence, or raise any questions on its regard.

"Thus," to use the language of the chancellor d'Aguesseau, "the archbishop of Cambray, who had fought like a lion in defence of his work, while there was a chance of victory, or even a chance of not being conquered, submitted in an instant, like the lowliest sheep of his flock. His pastoral letter, short and affecting, comforted his friends, afflicted his enemies, and falsified every prediction which had been made of the nice subtilties and distinctions with which he would seek to disguise his defeat." M. de Bausset gives extracts of several letters written by Fenelon, about this time; all of them breathe an amiable spirit of peace and resignation, but, in general, he declined all writing and discourse on the subject, and, at an early moment, almost wholly dismissed the controversy from his thoughts.

After what has been seen of the letters of the abbé Phillippeaux and the abbé Bossuet, it will not be surprizing, that the former spoke of Fenelon's pastoral letter, as consisting of dry expressions, and vague words; or that the latter should say, "that it was easy to discover its ambiguity and

pride, and impossible to read it without indignation." But, who can read without surprise, that the bishop of Meaux himself, said of it, "the cabal exalts the letter; disinterested persons think it full of ambiguity and pride;"—or that he should write to his nephew, who continued at Rome, "after all, I think Rome should be satisfied with the archbishop's letter: it contains the essential, and expresses, however pompously, his submission." He sent to his nephew some remarks on it, but desired him to keep them to himself. The bishop of Chartres thought of it very differently; he wrote to Fenelon, that "he was delighted with his perfect submission: I have no words to express how my heart is affected with your humble and generous action." The pope addressed a letter to Fenelon, much less kind, and less honourable to him than it would have been if the name of Lewis the fourteenth had not been called in to chill its terms.

With the single exception of the cardinal Cassanaté, a decided partizan of France, all the cardinals desired the abbé de Chantèrac to testify to Fenelon their respect and attachment. With friendly and wise solicitude, they advised him to observe the most rigid silence on the subject, and particularly to avoid further retractations, or explanations; they observed to him, that his act of submission was perfect, that the pope was satisfied with it, and that no one therefore had a right to

require more from him on the subject:—"It is impossible," writes the abbé de Chantèrac to him, "to praise, more than they did, your submission, your pastoral letter, your letters to the pope, the whole of your conduct. Some things they said to me on the subject must be reserved for private conversation."

It might be expected that the ready and perfect submission of Fenelon would soften the mind of Lewis the fourteenth; but he persisted in the line of extreme rigour, and Fenelon was to drink the cup of his humiliation to its dregs. The metropolitan prelates of his kingdom were ordered, by the king, to convene their suffragans, and, at an assembly of them, to accept the brief. The cardinal of Noailles, as archbishop of Paris, first assembled his suffragans. The assembly consisted of himself and the bishops of Meaux, Chartres, and Blois. As the three first of them had been the leaders of the attack on Fenelon, decency seemed to require, that some other metropolitan assembly should take the lead; but the court's opinion was known, and zeal was the order of the day. Instead of confining themselves to the acceptance of the brief, the cardinal and his suffragans petitioned the king for a general suppression of all the writings which Fenelon had published in his defence: in this superfluous display of zeal, seven of the remaining fifteen metropolitan assemblies followed their example.

All the metropolitan assemblies spoke in high terms of Fenelon's piety, virtue, and talents: some of them, among which was the metropolitan assembly of Paris, commended his submission as simple, absolute, and without any restriction. The wording of the declaration of that assembly was intrusted to Bossuet; and he mentions, in a letter to his nephew, that much of it, as he has prepared it, was softened, but, it was among his own suffragans that Fenelon met with the harshest usage. The bishop of Tournay intimated, that Fenelon's pastoral letter did not express an internal acquiescence in the brief of the pope. Fenelon, with mild dignity, repelled the imputation; and the bishops of Arras and St. Omers, his other suffragans, stood up in his support.

The next step of the court was to procure the registration of the brief. This, on account of some want of formality, was attended with difficulty, but the overpowering influence of Lewis the fourteenth, levelled every obstacle. The brief was presented for registration by the chancellor d'Aguesseau, then first attorney-general of his majesty. He pronounced, on that occasion, a discourse, which the president Henault describes, "as an immortal monument of the solidity of the church of France, and an eternal honour to the chancellor's memory." M. d'Aguesseau mentions in it Fenelon's submission in terms of high praise; "no discordant voice troubled the holy concert, the happy harmony

of the oracles of the church. What was the joy of the church, when she found that he, among the prelates, whose opposition she would have had most to fear, if his heart had been an accomplice of his understanding, had, more humble and more docile than the lowliest of his flock, anticipated the judgment of the prelates, and, by pronouncing an afflicting but salutary sentence on himself, hastened to encourage the church, frightened at his doctrine, by professing readily and solemnly, a submission without reserve, an obedience without bound, and an acquiescence without a shadow of restriction."

The chancellor informs us, that in his discourse, as he had originally penned it, he had expressed himself in stronger terms, in the praise of Fenelon, but that, when the discourse was read in manuscript to the king, he objected to them.—It is remarkable that the chancellor, who, in every part of his voluminous works, writes with more than roman gravity, appears always to have a smile on his countenance when he mentions quietism : he evidently considered it rather as an intrigue of the court than an affair of religion. The celebrated Leibniz, (Tom. 5, page 189, Cogit. Miscellaneæ,) observes, that, before the war of words began, the prelates should have agreed on a definition of the word love, and that such a definition would have prevented the dispute.

After the registration of the pope's brief in parliament, it only remained that a report should

be made of the affair to the next assembly of the clergy.

This was intrusted to Bossuet, and he penned this report in the language of moderation. "It was justly observed," he says in it, "that the archbishop of Cambray, who had more interest than any other person, in eluding, if it had been possible, the sentence which condemned him, was the first to submit to it, and expressed his submission by a formal act. We recollect with joy the names of the illustrious bishops whom he imitated on this occasion. Following the example of the king, all the provinces united in praising that submission : and thus it was shown, that all, which it had been found necessary to say against the work, had been spoken without any breach of charity." These expressions of Bossuet, as they apply to Fenelon, are very cold ; they are less an eulogy of Fenelon than an artful conclusion, from premises which did not allow it, in favour of the vehemence of conduct, with which Bossuet knew he was generally reproached, and which Fenelon's humble submission tended to place in its worst light.

In speaking of madame de Guyon, Bossuet says,—
"As to the abominations, which seemed the necessary consequences of her doctrine, they were wholly out of the question ; she herself always mentioned them with horror." In this solemn and explicit declaration of the innocence of her morals, ended the various charges and insinuations which had been

made against madame de Guyon with so much publicity, and with such parade.

Here the affair of quietism ends. At the close of his account of it, M. de Bausset expresses himself in terms, which, if we make some allowance for his fear of saying any thing harsh of Lewis the fourteenth, may be considered a fair representation of the merit and demerit of the general conduct of the principal actors. All of them, he says, preserved in it the character of greatness, which posterity has stamped on them. Seduced by his own virtuous mind, Fenelon thought that the highest degree of virtue attainable by man, was to unite himself to the divine perfections, by a love of God, free from interest; and he rectified, in the writings which he published in his defence, all that was incorrect or equivocal in the work which was the subject of dispute;—Bossuet, crowned with triumph and glory, preserved his high rank of oracle of the Gallican church: but Fenelon was blameable for his admiration of the supposed spiritual gifts of a visionary woman, for permitting his admiration of them to prevail over his better reason, and to prevent his surrendering opinions, perhaps less erroneous in themselves than in the terms in which he expressed them, to the peace of the church. On the other hand, Bossuet was blameable for connecting a mere question of doctrine with a personal charge of the worst kind, against an estimable and amiable adversary.

Having thus assigned to Bossuet and Fenelon, what he considers their due share of praise and blame, M. de Bausset proceeds to his great idol:—Lewis the fourteenth, he says, comes before us in his proper light ; he does not pretend to be a judge of doctrine, he does not pretend to dictate to the church, he petitions for a clear decision, and when he receives it, then, as the external bishop, he causes it to be executed according to the canons, and as sovereign, he causes it to be executed with legal formality. But had not Lewis the fourteenth his share of blame ? By his severities to Fenelon and his friends, by his marked support of Bossuet, by his pointed instructions to his ambassadors by his letters, almost menacing, to the pope, did not the external bishop attempt to influence the decision ? Did he not anticipate the judgment ?

On the pope, M. de Bausset is silent : to the present writer, the pope appears the only actor in the business whose conduct was perfectly free from blame. The real errors in the work of Fenelon, which was denounced to the pope, would have justified a more severe censure, or rather a censure expressed in harsher terms, than the pope adopted. To the extreme of severity the pope was repeatedly urged, (and we have seen in what terms,) by the French monarch : but he listened to meekness, and to wisdom, which is always meek. He pronounced a censure, afflicting to Fenelon, but much milder than the king required, or extreme justice

warranted. He generously wept over the virtue, the piety, and the talents, the abuse of which he was forced to condemn, and did every thing in his power to heal the wound he was obliged to inflict.

Fenelon's submission, however, made him the hero of the day. "It stands a solitary example in history," says the chancellor d'Aguesseau, "of a controversy upon a point of doctrine, which one single sentence terminated, at the instant, without its reproduction in any other form, and without any attempt to reverse it by power, or to elude it by distinctions. The glory of it is due to Fenelon."

Some attempts were made to effect a reconciliation between Fenelon and his episcopal antagonists, but such a reconciliation never took place. M. de Bausset, however, informs his readers, that he has discovered vestiges of a friendly correspondence, after the affair of quietism, between Fenelon and the bishop of Chartres; and cites a letter of madame de Maisonfort, which mentions a projected journey of M. de St. André, the confidential grand-vicar of Bossuet, to Cambray, for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation between Bossuet and Fenelon. It appears that Fenelon uniformly expressed himself of Bossuet with respect, and mentioned his talents and the services he had rendered to religion, with admiration.

It is singular, that at a subsequent time, when Bossuet was worn down with age and infirmity, he

applied to Lewis the fourteenth, to nominate his nephew, the abbé Bossuet, of whom such frequent mention has been made in the preceding pages, to be his coadjutor, and of course his successor, in the bishopric of Meaux, and that he met with an absolute refusal. After the death of the abbé de Phillippeaux, the other agent of Bossuet, a relation of quietism, supposed to be written by him, was published at Paris; and, on the application of some of the family of Fenelon, was declared, by an arrêt du concile, to be scandalous and defamatory, and ordered to be publicly burnt.

A question has been made, whether Fenelon was sincere in his retractation. On this point, we have the testimony of the chevalier Ramsay. In a formal conversation, which he had with Fenelon, the chevalier observed to him, that he could not reconcile his condemnation of his book, with his adherence to his avowed opinion of the possible existence of a pure, and absolutely disinterested love of God. Fenelon replied, "that, in condemning his book, the church had not condemned the pure love of God; that it had only condemned the expressions used by him, in explaining it, and those," he admitted, "were unfit for a dogmatical work. My book," he said to the chevalier, "is good for nothing; it is an abortion of imagination, it is not a work of the heart; I wish you not to read it." The doctrine itself remained dear to his heart till it ceased to beat. He left behind him a

voluminous manuscript on the subject, to be delivered to the pope after his decease.

We have seen that madame de Guyon was imprisoned, soon after the dispute on quietism first broke out : a short time after its termination, she was released. She then retired to Blois, where she passed the remainder of her days in retirement and devotion, entirely silent on the events of her life, her principles, and her writings. She died at an advanced age, adored by the poor, and universally esteemed. In every vicissitude of life, she preserved the esteem of the Hotel de Beauvilliers, and her other distinguished friends. A few days before her death she made her will : she prefixes to it a profession of her faith, of the purity of her intentions, and her submission to the church.

To close this account, perhaps too minute, and therefore already too long, of the affair of quietism, it remains only to mention the steady affection which all the ancient friends of Fenelon, with the single exception of madame de Maintenon, preserved for him during the long continuance of the court's displeasure. Nothing could exceed their attachment to him. He was a bond of union which cemented them together, for many a good and kind purpose. " They took every opportunity," says the duke de St. Simon, " of meeting together ; it was their delight to talk of Fenelon, to regret him, to express their wishes for his return to them, to contrive means of seeing him."

But none of them was more warmly or steadily attached to Fenelon than his former pupil, the duke of Burgundy. Lewis the fourteenth enjoined him not to correspond with Fenelon, and spies were placed near each of them to prevent their intercourse. Four years elapsed before there was the slightest communication between them: the duke then contrived to send a letter to Fenelon.—“At length, my dear archbishop,” writes the amiable youth, “I have an opportunity of breaking the silence, which for these four years I have been obliged to keep with you. I have suffered much since we parted; but one of my greatest sufferings has been, not to have it in my power, during all this time, to testify to you how much I felt for you, and to assure you, that my friendship for you has increased with your misfortunes. I shall not say how much I am disgusted with what has been done in your regard.” He gives the archbishop an account of his studies; “I think,” he says, “that I persist more steadily than I did, in the path of virtue: but pray to God for me, that he will please to strengthen me in my good resolutions, and not suffer me to offend him again.” Fenelon’s answer is most affectionate; it contains much good advice, expressed in the most affectionate language, but scarcely one word of himself, or his misfortunes: “My mind,” he says in it, “is at rest; my greatest misfortune is not to see you. I would

give a thousand lives as a drop of water, to see you what God wishes you to be.”

SOME time after Bossuet's decease, M. le Dieu, whose family resided in the neighbourhood of Cambray, spent a day with Fenelon, by his desire, and appears to have been highly pleased with his reception.—He mentions in his letter to madame de Maisonfort, that, after supper the conversation turned on the recent death of Bossuet, and that he was asked, whether in his last illness, Bossuet had received the sacraments of the church,—by whom they were administered to him,—who prepared him for death. “I thought within myself,” says the abbé, “that Fenelon, who put the last of these questions to me, recollected at the time, what had passed between them, and supposed that Bossuet stood in need of a stout confessor.”

Without a fuller investigation of the conduct of the contending prelates than the writer has been able to bestow on the subject, it would be presumptuous in him to pretend to assign to them their exact degrees of blame, (for blameable they both were,) in their personal hostilities. It seems evident to the writer, that Bossuet had a just, a kind, and a generous mind, and that much of what appeared reprehensible in his conduct towards Fenelon, was owing to the violent councils of the cabal

of the duke de Maine, who were jealous of the party attached to the duke of Burgundy, and likely to enjoy his exclusive favour if he should come into power. Of that party, Fenelon was confessedly the head: it was therefore the interest of the cabal to effect his ruin, and unfortunately for Bossuet, they made him, unknown to himself, the instrument of their designs, and thus drew him by exaggerated representations of the danger of the church from Fenelon's writings, into measures equally repugnant to his natural judgment and feelings. Bossuet left behind him the character of great ignorance in common affairs. Fenelon was allowed to possess great knowledge of men and manners; and, notwithstanding his sublime spirituality, Fenelon had probably a much greater knowledge of the affairs of this world, than his serious and severe adversary.— Besides, in extenuation of Bossuet's violence, it should never be forgotten, that, in the main object of the controversy, he was perfectly in the right.

CHAP. XIII.

Telemachus.

DURING the disputes concerning quietism, a circumstance took place, which increased, and perhaps unalterably fixed the aversion of Lewis the fourteenth to Fenelon:—the publication of *Telemachus*.

It appears to have been composed by Fenelon, while he was preceptor to the royal dukes. Not long after the affair of quietism broke out, Fenelon gave the manuscript of it to a valet de chambre, to be copied by him ; and the valet sold it to a bookseller at Paris. At that time, the police so narrowly watched the motions of Fenelon ; they had notice of the publication, and, when the bookseller was at the 208th page of the impression, seized, in the king's name, all the copies which were found in the possession of the bookseller ; and every precaution was used to annihilate the work. But it was too late ; the manuscript was preserved ; it was sold to Adrian Moetjens, a bookseller at the Hague, and by him, it was immediately printed. This edition appeared in 1699 ; and is very incorrect. Editions of it were rapidly multiplied ; it was translated into every European language, and universally read and admired.

Immediately on its appearance, it was supposed to contain an intentional and pointed satire of Lewis the fourteenth, his court, and his government. Calypso was supposed to be the marchioness of Montespan ; Eucharis, mademoiselle de Fontanges ; Telemachus, the duke of Burgundy ; Mentor, the duke of Beauvilliers ; Antiopé, the duchess of Burgundy ; Protesilaus, Louvois ; Idomeneus, our king James the second ; Sesostris, Lewis the fourteenth.

It does not appear, and Fenelon himself always

denied, that, in the composition of the work, he intended to pourtray these objects, or intended to lead the attention of his readers to them : but it is easy to suppose, that, as he unavoidably wrote it under a strong impression of what immediately passed under his eye, the work would contain a more striking resemblance of the scenes passing before him, and of the principal actors in them, than it would have discovered, if the author had lived at a distance from them. Admitting, however, that no such individual resemblance was intended, or can be fairly traced in *Telemachus*, still, it contained enough to excite the monarch's highest displeasure. The disrespectful mention which is made, in every part of it, of ambition, of extensive conquest, of military fame, of magnificence, and of almost every thing else, which Lewis the fourteenth considered as the glory of his reign, could not but prejudice the monarch against the writer. When he reflected that it was the production of one, on whom he had conferred splendid marks of his favour, he could not but think the publication an act of ingratitude ; when he recollected that the preceptor had probably instilled the principles of the work into the heir of his throne, the preceptor would naturally become an object of personal hatred ; and these feelings would be much aggravated by the reception which the work met with, in the countries whom Lewis the fourteenth viewed as his natural enemies, and who, soon after

its first publication, confederated for the destruction of him and his family. He knew their hatred of him, and whatever they cherished, he could not but consider as hostile to him.

In the monarch's general dislike of the work, madame de Maintenon unavoidably shared; and, as Lewis the fourteenth suspected her of a partiality to Fenelon, her interest required that she should take every opportunity of expressing her disapprobation of the author, and that she should be forward in condemning the offending work. This was soon perceived by the courtiers: they quickly saw that *Telemachus* was never to be mentioned.—Fenelon was a member of the French academy: when his successor was received into it, both his successor and the member, who presided at that sitting of the academy, pronounced an eulogium of Fenelon; both praised his other works, but neither mentioned *Telemachus*.

After several editions of *Telemachus* had been printed, on the model of the edition of 1699, Moetjens himself gave a more perfect edition of it in 1701; and that edition was generally followed, in all subsequent editions, till the edition of 1717. In that year, the marquis of Fenelon, great nephew to the archbishop, published a new edition of *Telemachus*, from a copy corrected by Fenelon himself. With the leave of the regent, the marquis dedicated this edition to Lewis the fifteenth, who was then in his eighth year. This edition became the

textus receptus, or the model, from which all subsequent impressions of Telemachus have been taken.

As a composition, Telemachus has perhaps received its full measure of praise. It is eminently defective in unity of design, abounds with unnecessary details, is often prosaic ; its moral is oftener taught by long discourses, than by action, its proper vehicle in an epic poem ; and it contains more of profane love, than might be expected from a man of prayer, always writing at the foot of the cross ; but it abounds with passages of exquisite beauty, and contains some of true sublimity. A soft tinge of poetic, and, it may be said, of religious melancholy is shed over the whole, which seems to elevate it to real poetry, gives it an indescribable charm, and interests the reader, both for the author and his hero. We find, by M. de Bausset, that Mentor's apology to Telemachus, for the faults of kings, was inserted in the manuscript, long after the first edition of the work, and consequently long after

“ The haughty Bourbon's unrelenting hate—”

DRYDEN.

had sealed the author's doom.

CHAP. XIV.

Fenelon's other literary Works, and general literary Character.

THE mention of Telemachus, naturally leads to some account of the other works of Fenelon, and a general view of his literary character.

All his writings shew much grandeur and delicacy of sentiment, great fertility of genius, a correct taste, and exquisite sensibility. The poetical character appears in them all ; but generally, it is poetry, descended from the heavens, to converse familiarly with man, and lead him, by her sweetest and simplest strains, to virtue and happiness. By assiduous study, the works of the best writers of antiquity became familiar to him ; he imbibed their spirit ; and his intimate acquaintance with their writings, was his resource in every vicissitude in life, his ornament in prosperity, his comfort in adverse fortune : and, in the memorable contest we have mentioned, in which every thing dear to him was involved, the charm which it spread over his writings, enabled him to divide the world in his favour, against his mighty adversary.

He appears to have formed himself more on the Greek than the Roman. All the good writers of antiquity are far removed from the extremes of simplicity and refinement ; but the Greek, by their greater simplicity, have an evident advantage over

the Roman. The writings of Fenelon, when quietism did not entangle him in its refinements, are distinguished by simplicity both of sentiment and expression. Without appearing to be measured, his periods are mellifluous, and, by a profusion, sometimes perhaps carried to excess, of the little connective words, which the French language possesses much more than the English, but in no proportion to the Greek, each of his sentences always leads to the following, and harmonises with it both in sense and sound. His *Telemachus*, and his replies to Bossuet, contain many passages of great splendor and pathos; but their greatest beauty is their tender simplicity. This attached every reader to him, and gave Bossuet those sleepless nights which he ingenuously owned. The greatest fault of his writings is, that they abound with what, in music, is called *rosalia*, a repetition of the same idea in the next higher notes.

After *Telemachus*, the principal literary work of Fenelon is, his *Dialogues sur l'Eloquence en general, et sur celle de la chaire en particulier*: it was published after his death. The chief aim of it is to shew, that the real object of eloquence, is to excite in the auditors, virtuous and noble sentiments, and to impel them to generous and virtuous deeds; and that, when eloquence falls short of this, it fails of its end. He particularly applies this observation to the eloquence of the pulpit: we shall present the reader with a general view of

what he says on this subject, when we shall have occasion to mention his sermons.

On popular oratory, he observes, that the first thing to be required of a public speaker is, that he should be a virtuous man : this, he pronounces to be indispensable to the success of his eloquence. He asks, “how is a mercenary and ambitious orator to cure his country of corruption and ambition? If riches be his aim, how is he to correct the venality of his countrymen? “I know,” says Fenelon, “that a virtuous and disinterested orator should not be permitted to want the necessities of life; but let him put himself in the way of not wanting them; let his manners be simple, unpretending, frugal, and laborious; if necessary, let him work with his own hands, for his subsistence. The public may confer honours on him, may invest him with authority: but, if he is master of his passions, if he is really disinterested, he will never make any use of his authority for his private advantage; he will always be ready to resign it, when he cannot preserve it without dissimulation or flattery. To persuade the people, an orator should be incorruptible: his eloquence and talents will otherwise ruin the state. Where a man has his fortune in view, he must please every one, and manage every one; how is such a man to obtain an ascendant over his countrymen? Does he seek riches? let him embrace some of the professions by which riches are required: but, let him not make his

speeches in the public cause, the means of acquiring them."

Fenelon observes of Cicero, "that the speeches which he made, while he was young, rather amuse the mind than move the heart; that, he seems rather occupied by a wish of exciting admiration, than by his client's cause; yet that, even in the most flowery of these harangues, he shews great talents of persuasion and of moving the passions. "But," says Fenelon, "it is in the harangues which Cicero made in the cause of the republic, when he was advanced in life, that he appears to advantage. Then experience in affairs of magnitude, the love of liberty, and the view of the dangers which surrounded him, raised him to efforts worthy of a great orator. When he is to support the cause of dying liberty, to animate the republic against Anthony, you have no longer a play of words, no longer an antithesis; then, he is negligent; he finds in nature, all that is wanting to seize, to animate, to carry off his hearers.

Of antithesis, the bane of modern writings, Fenelon says:—"I do not absolutely proscribe antithesis; when the things to be expressed are naturally opposed to each other, it is proper to mark their opposition. There, antithesis is the natural and simple form of expression; but, to go out of the way to form batteries of words, is childish."

In the same work, Fenelon observes, that, "to

a perfect intelligence of the sacred writings, some previous acquaintance with the works of Homer, Plato, Xenophon, and other celebrated writers of antiquity, is absolutely necessary. "After this, the scripture," he says, "will no longer surprise. The same customs, the same mode of narrative, the same splendid imagery, the same pathetic touches are found in each. Where they differ, the advantage is wholly on the side of the scripture; it infinitely surpasses all the writers of antiquity in simplicity, in spirit, in grandeur. Homer himself never approaches the sublimity of the canticles of Moses; of that canticle in particular, which all the children of Israel were obliged to learn by heart. No Greek or Latin poetry is comparable to the Psalms. That, which begins, "The God of gods, the Lord hath spoken, and hath called up the earth," exceeds whatever human imagination has produced. Neither Homer, nor any other poet, equals Isaiah, in describing the majesty of God, in whose presence empires are as a grain of sand, the whole universe as a tent, which, to-day is set up, and removed to-morrow. Sometimes, as when he paints the charms of peace, Isaiah has the softness and sweetness of an eclogue; at others, he soars above mortal conception. But, what is there in profane antiquity, comparable to the wailings of Jeremy when he mourns over the calamities of his people? or to Nahum, when he foresees, in spirit, the downfall of Nineveh, under the assault of an innumerable

army? We almost behold the formidable host, and hear the arms and the chariots.—Read Daniel, denouncing to Balthazar, the vengeance of God, ready to fall upon him; compare it with the most sublime passages of pagan antiquity; you find nothing comparable to it. It must be added that, in the scriptures, every thing sustains itself; whether we consider the historical, the legal, or the poetical part of it, the proper character appears in all.”

On the writings of the ancient fathers, he has the following judicious observations. “Some well informed persons have not always done to the fathers the justice due to them. They seem to have formed their opinion of them by a harsh metaphor of Tertullian, a swollen period of St. Cyprian, an obscure passage of St. Ambrose, a subtle jingling antithesis of St. Augustin, or a quibble of St. Peter Chrysologus. But we ought to consider how much the fathers were necessarily influenced by the generally depraved taste of the times in which they lived. Good taste began to decay at Rome, soon after the Augustan æra. Juvenal possesses less delicacy than Horace; both Seneca the tragic writer, and Lucan, have a disagreeable and turgid style. In Greece, attic literature had fallen into neglect, before St. Paul or St. Gregory Nazianzen wrote. A kind of minute scholastic subtlety had taken place of sound taste and judgment. The fathers were generally educated by the wrangling rhetoricians of their times, and naturally fell into

the general manner : yet they seem continually to struggle against it. To speak in a simple and natural manner, was then generally esteemed a fault : declamation, not eloquence, was the leading object. But, if we bestow on the writings of the fathers a patient and impartial perusal, we shall discover in them pearls of inestimable value. St. Cyprian possesses a greatness of spirit, and a vehemence, resembling those of Demosthenes. We find in St. Chrysostom an exquisite judgment, noble images, a feeling and amiable morality. St. Augustin is at once sublime and popular ; he rises into dignity, by the most simple expressions. He converses, he interrogates, he answers. It is a conversation between him and his hearers ; his similes, generally introduced very opportunely, throw light on his subject. He sometimes descends to the coarseness of the populace, but it is to reform them, and he leads them by it to what is right. St. Bernard was a prodigy, in a barbarous age. We find in him delicacy, elevation, sentiment, tenderness and vehemence. We shall be astonished at the beauty and grandeur which we meet in the fathers, if we take into consideration the times in which they wrote. We readily pardon the pompous diction of Montaigne, the obsolete diction of Marot ; why not shew the same indulgence to the fathers ? Why not ascribe their defects to the defects of the times in which they lived ?”

The *letters* of Fenelon have been generally

admired ; they appear to have been chiefly written on the impulse of the moment, without study, and without the least view to publication. The greater part of them are on subjects of piety : but many of them are addressed to persons in public situations, or engaged in the ordinary affairs of life, and abound with profound and delicate observations. “ What you have most to fear,” he writes to a young nobleman, “ is idleness and dissipation. Idleness is as prejudicial in the world, as it is criminal before God. A soft and indolent man, must always be a poor creature. If he is placed in any considerable situation, he is sure to disgrace it. If he has the most brilliant talents, idleness prevents his making any use of them. He cannot cultivate them, or acquire the information wanted for the proper discharge of his duties, or make necessary exertions, or accommodate himself, for any length of time, to those whom it is his duty or his interest to conciliate. What can be done for such a man ? Business wearies him, serious reading fatigues him, attendance at court is irksome to him, military duty interrupts his pleasures :—Pride alone should make such a being insupportable to himself.

“ Do *You* beware of this wretched existence. At court, with the king, in the army, among the generals, wherever you may be, exert yourself to behave with civility. Endeavour to acquire that politeness, which shews a respectful deference to every one. No airs of dignity, no affectation, no

bustle ; learn to behave to every one according to his rank, his reputation, his merit, and his credit. Give to merit, esteem ; to talents, which virtue accompanies, confidence and attachment ; to rank, civility and ceremony. On days of general representation, speak to every one, but enter into particular conversation with none. Bad company is always disgraceful ; it is ruinous to a young man, who has not yet an established character. It is excusable to see few persons, but nothing excuses your seeing a single person of a blasted reputation. Shew such persons no indignity, but keep them at a great distance.

“ A seclusion from the world to indulge in idleness is dishonourable ; but a retirement, employed in acts of duty or professional exertions, acquires general esteem.

“ As to general acquaintance, consider them as a kind of imperfect friends, upon whom you should not rely ; and whom, except from urgent necessity, you should never trust ; but you should serve them, as opportunity offers, and endeavour to lay them under obligations to you. Among these persons, you are not to look for perfect characters ; be most connected with such among them, as are most worthy.

“ As to true friends, chuse them with great care ; but their number must be small. Have no friend, who does not fear God, who is not wholly governed by the truths of religion. They should

be a little older than yourself. To friends like those, open your heart without reserve ; and keep nothing secret from them, except the secrets of others.”

Soon after Fenelon was appointed preceptor of the royal princes, he was elected a member of the French academy. Conformably to an established rule of that institution, he pronounced a discourse before the academy on his reception. Few of the discourses pronounced on these occasions, have survived the day on which they were delivered. Fenelon's was generally admired ; the authors of the *Bibliothèque Britannique*, (vol. 19. p. 54,) spoke of it, in terms of great commendation. In one part of it, Fenelon illustrates, by an ingenious comparison, what should be a great object of every writer in the general ordonnance of his work : “ the beauties of a literary composition,” he says, “ should resemble those of architecture ; the boldest works are not always the best. No part of an edifice should be consructed with a view to its own particular beauty ; each should be constructed with a view to the strength and beauty of the whole.”

When the academy projected their Dictionary, they directed M. Dacier, their secretary, to communicate the plan of it to Fenelon, and to request his thoughts on the design, and the best mode of carrying it into execution. Fenelon replied by a letter, published after his decease, with the title,

Lettre à l'Academie Française. He does not confine himself to the particular point to which his attention was called by the academy, but throws out many general observations, replete with judgment and taste, on the actual state of literature in France. His remarks on French poetry are interesting, and shew, that in a very advanced age, for they were not written till a very late period of his life, his soul was still wedded to immortal verse. He admits the imperfection of the heroic poetry of his countrymen.

“ Our versification,” he says in this letter, “ loses, if I am not deceived, much more than it gains by rhyme. It loses by it, much of its vivacity, its ease, and its harmony. It frequently happens, that the rhyme, which has cost the poet so much labour, reduces him to the necessity of extending and weakening his period. He is often forced to employ two or three superfluous verses for the sake of one which he particularly wishes to introduce. We are scrupulous in the choice of rhymes, and anxiously seek for those, which are thought to be rich ; but we are not as scrupulous as we should be about solidity of thought and sentiment, clearness of expression, natural arrangement, and real dignity of language. By rhyme, we gain little except a wearisome uniformity of cadence, which is so far from being grateful to the ear, that we carefully avoid it in prose. The repetition of final syllables fatigues us in heroic verses. There is more melody

in those odes and stanzas, in which the rhymes are irregularly arranged ; but our grand heroic strains, which require the most harmonious, the most varied, and the most majestic sound, frequently consist of verses which have no pretence to perfection.”

Fenelon's other works principally relate to religious subjects ; a considerable portion of them are of a polemic nature, on the subject of the jansenistical controversy, in which, in his latter years, he took an active part. His *Treatise on the Existence of God*, was addressed, in a course of letters, to the duke of Orleans, the celebrated regent. M. de Bausset shews, that a work, intitled, *Lives of the Philosophers*, often published with his name, is unjustly ascribed to Fenelon.

CHAP. XV.

Fenelon in his Diocese.

WHEN Fenelon was nominated to the See of Cambray, every motive of interest and ambition must have prompted him, (in opposition to the canons which called him to his diocese), to make the court his habitual residence, and must have allured him to it by very specious reasons. In the opinion of the public, and even in his own conscience, if it were not unusually stubborn, such a

resolution would require no other apology, than his office of preceptor to the young princes. It would naturally suggest to him, that personal attendance on them was his first obligation.

But Fenelon considered residence in his diocese too sacred a duty to be neglected; and therefore, before he acquiesced in his nomination, he stipulated, that his office should, on no account, prevent his residing with his flock, during nine months of every year. The royal mandate now made his constant residence among them a matter of necessity; and probably, except so far as it separated him from his friends, he found the compliance with it, no great mortification.

A letter written by him to the duke of Beauvilliers, gives a pleasing view of the situation of his mind, soon after he was settled among his flock. "I work," he says, in it, "softly and gently, and endeavour, as much as I can, to put myself in the way of being useful to my flock. They begin to love me, I endeavour to make them find me easy of access, uniform in my conduct, and without haughtiness, rigour, interest, or artifice: they appear already to have some confidence in me; and let me assure you, that even these good Flemminers, with their homely appearance, have more finesse than I wish to have in my conduct towards them. They inquire of one another, whether I really am banished; and they question my servants about it; if they put the question to me, I shall

make no mystery of it. It certainly is an affliction to me to be separated from you, and the good duchess, and my other friends; but, from the general scene, I am happy to be at a distance, and sing the canticle of deliverance."

From the recent occurrences of Fenelon's life, it might be natural to expect, that, in the administration of his diocese, he would err by excess of zeal; but from that defect no one was ever more free. To do the kind and common thing, while conscience allowed it, to abstain from unnecessary acts of authority, to avoid every display of talent or virtue, to remove by meekness and moderation what was blamable, to improve, with prudence and sobriety, what was good, and always to keep himself and his own exertions from the public eye, was the uniform tenor of his conduct. During the fifteen years, for which he governed his diocese, his administration of it was uniformly wise and meek; between him and his flock, his chapter, or his clergy, there never was an appearance of discord: and though, by his indefatigable zeal, he soon made the district committed to his charge, the model of a well regulated diocese; his biographers do not record of him, a single instance of what are generally called acts of vigour, or even a single instance of flaring virtue. The peace of heaven was with him, and was communicated by him to all his flock.

He allowed himself a short time for sleep, rose

at a very early hour, gave some time to prayer and pious meditation, and then arranged with one of his grand-vicars, the employments of the day. Except on Saturdays, or on festivals particularly celebrated in some church of his diocese, when he officiated there, he said mass every day in his private chapel ; on Saturdays, he said it in his metropolitan church, and, during the rest of that morning, heard indiscriminately, the confessions of all, who presented themselves. Till nine o'clock, he was visible to those only, who attended him by appointment ; after that hour, till he dined, his doors were open to all persons who professed to have real business with him. At noon, he dined ; his table was suitable to his rank, but he himself was extremely abstemious, eating only the simplest and lightest food, and of that, sparingly. All his chaplains were admitted to his table : it was his general rule to shew them the greatest respect ; if he sent them into the country, on any business of his diocese, it was always in one of his own carriages, and with one of his own attendants, that the respect which he shewed them, might attract to them the general respect of his flock. Both before and after dinner, he himself said grace with seriousness, but without affectation : the reader will hear with pleasure that his tried friend, the virtuous and faithful abbé de Chantèrac, was always placed next him, on his left hand. During dinner, the conversation was general, and strangers were struck

equally, with its ease and politeness. After dinner, all the company retired to a large apartment, for about an hour ; there, the same style of conversation was continued, but a small table was sometimes placed before Fenelon, on which he signed his name to papers which required immediate dispatch, and he sometimes took that opportunity of giving directions to his chaplains, on the affairs of his diocese. An hour was spent in this manner, after which, unless he was prevented by urgent business or necessary visits, he lived to himself till nine o'clock ; then, he supped, and at ten, the whole of his household assembled : one of his chaplains said night-prayers ; at the end of them, the archbishop rose, and gave his general blessing to the assembly.

The only recreation of Fenelon was to walk in his garden or in the open country. His letters, like those of Cicero, often express the satisfaction which he felt in retiring, after the agitation and hurry of business, to the simple and interesting scenes of nature. By their stillness and calm, any ruffle of the day was quickly smoothed, and his mind, wearied by study or business, soon recovered its freshness and elasticity. There too, his piety was often invigorated : “ The country,” he says in one of his letters, “ delights me. In the midst of it, I find God’s holy peace. Oh ! what excellent company is God ! with him one never is alone.”— In his country walks with his friends, his conver-

sation was particularly instructive and pleasing : this circumstance is frequently mentioned by his contemporaries. “ No person,” says the duke de St. Simon, “ ever possessed in a higher degree than Fenelon, the happy talent of easy, light, and ever decent conversation ; it was perfectly enchanting ; his mild uniform piety troubled no one, and was respected by all. No one felt his superiority ; every one found him on his own level. If you quitted him for a moment, you instantly ran back to him.” He often joined the peasants, sat down on the grass with them, talked to them, comforted them, went into their cottages, placed himself at table with their families, and partook of their meals.

In the midst of the vexations of Fenelon, during the disputes on quietism, a fire burned to the ground, the archiepiscopal palace at Cambray, and consumed all his books and writings. He bore his misfortune with great resignation. As soon as the abbé de Langeron was informed of it, he hastened to apprise Fenelon of it, and found him conversing with his friends, so much at ease, that he concluded he was ignorant of it, and began with much preparation, to apprise him of it. Fenelon interrupted the abbé ; he told him that he was informed of his loss, and remarked to him, that “ it was better his palace should be burnt to the ground, than a peasant’s cottage.” At his own expence, he rebuilt the palace, and furnished it in a suitable style of

magnificence ; but he did not allow the arms of his family to be fixed or painted on any part of it : he probably recollected how severely, in his dialogues, he had censured the cardinal de Richelieu, for almost covering the Sorbonne with his arms.

An early care of Fenelon, after his settlement in his diocese, was to establish a seminary for completing the education of such of his flock as were intended for the church. He always presided at the examination of those who presented themselves to take orders. These examinations were conducted with such a happy mixture of ease and solemnity, that none ventured to present themselves for ordination, who had not gone through a serious course of previous study, while all were sufficiently at ease to discover, by their behaviour, their real dispositions and talents. This was so well arranged, that, through the whole period of his prelacy, no priest was ordained, who, previously to his ordination, had not been five times examined by Fenelon himself. It was Fenelon's wish to put his seminary under the direction of his beloved Sulpiciens, and he intimated his wish to M. Tronson their superior ; but fearful of involving his friends in his own disgrace, he avoided pressing it on him.

Twice a week during the lent, he preached in some parish church of his diocese ; on solemn festivals, he preached in his metropolitan church ; in his visitations of his diocese, he always made a familiar discourse, in the church of the parish which

he visited ; so that, in his large diocese, there was not a single parish church in which he had not preached more than once. It was his opinion that, in general, sermons were not sufficiently instructive. “ The people,” he says, in his dialogues on the eloquence of the pulpit, “ hear continually of the scripture, of the church, of the two laws, of the priesthood of Moses, Aaron, Melchisedeck, and of the prophets and apostles ; but little pains are taken to inform them from the pulpit what all this means, or what these persons have done. A preacher should explain to the people regularly and in great detail, the gospels, the mysteries, the origin and institution of the sacraments, the traditions, the discipline, the offices, and the ceremonies of the church.—Such instructions will strengthen their faith, give them a just notion of religion, and, by degrees, enable them to profit of all they see or hear in their churches. Sermons should be short, but frequent, and the same sermon should be often repeated.”

He disliked the divisions and subdivisions of sermons : “ These,” he says, “ were unknown to the fathers. St. Bernard, the last in time of the fathers, often remarks the natural division of his subject, but does not observe it in his sermons.”

Fenelon declares against the practice of committing sermons to writing, and then learning them by heart. “ Consider,” he says, “ the advantage of speaking without minute preparation. The

preacher possesses himself; he expresses himself naturally, his words flow immediately from his own sources; his expressions, (if he has a natural talent for eloquence), are lively and moving. The warmth of the moment suggests to him expressions and images, which would not have occurred to him in his cabinet. His action is natural, and has no appearance of art.—Above all, a preacher, who has learned by experience to discern the effect of his oratory on his audience, observes what fixes their attention, what makes an impression on them, where he fails. He sees where the imagery should be bolder, the principles more fully expressed, the conclusions more distinctly or forcibly pointed. In all these particulars, how generally must a preacher fail, who learns his sermons by heart? Such a preacher dares not say a word more than is in his lesson; his style inevitably smells of its labour; his compositions, as was said of those of Isocrates, are better read than heard. In spite of all his care, there is a monotony, a something forced, in the inflections of his voice. He is not so much a man who speaks, as an orator who recites; his action is confined, his look shews his dependence on his memory, he dares not abandon himself to the feelings of the moment, lest the thread of his discourse should slip from him. The hearer perceives the mechanism of the exhibition, and remains unmoved.” In support of his opinion, Fenelon cites St. Augustine, who declares, that “ those

preachers, who speak their discourses word for word, as they have written them down, cannot repeat and enforce a truth till they perceive that it is perfectly understood ; and thus deprive themselves of one of the most powerful means of instruction." Still, Fenelon admitted a considerable degree of preparation : he presupposes, that the preacher has seriously meditated his subject ; and, (what certainly is taking much for granted), that the speaker has a natural gift of extemporaneous oratory.

As the subject is interesting, we have given Fenelon's sentiments upon it at length : yet perhaps it is a mere question of words. If an unprepared and a prepared sermon be equal in other respects, the former, being the most natural, must necessarily have a great advantage over the latter : but it must be taken into consideration, that the gift of unpremeditated eloquence is very rare. On the general question, therefore, as leading to practical inference, we must weigh the advantages of extempore eloquence, against the small number of those, on whom the gift of it is generally conferred ; and, viewing it in this light, we shall be tempted to conclude, that the number of those to whom extempore predication should be recommended, is very small.

This leads to the further inquiry,—which is best, that sermons should be read, or, that they should be spoken by heart ? On this point, great authorities differ. It is remarkable, that Bourda-

loue, who had no action, and spoke, though distinctly, very rapidly, with his eyes almost closed, and with little inflection of voice, was a decided advocate for a sermon's being prepared with great attention, learned by heart, and exactly spoken as it is committed to paper: while Massillon, whose action was both elegant and vehement, and father de la Rue, more celebrated for action than any other preacher in France, maintained the contrary opinion. Father Segaud, (himself a preacher of eminence), thought Fenelon's sermons were evidently the worse for their want of preparation; he admitted that they contained splendid and beautiful passages, but thought the effect of them was destroyed by the weakness of other passages. Father Segaud, however, listened to Fenelon with the cool attention of a critic: the flock of Fenelon heard him with other ears: to them, he was the good shepherd, who knew his flock; whom his flock knew, and whose voice they loved.

We have already had occasion to mention the attachment of Fenelon's friends to him; M. de Bausset relates many facts, and presents us with extracts of many letters of Fenelon, which show his attachment to them, the warm interest which he took in their concerns, and his great anxiety that the displeasure of the court, under which he laboured, should not be extended to them. To every part of his own family he was uniformly kind. The extracts of his letters to them, which

M. de Bausset has published, are equally replete with religion and good sense. It was natural that his relations should feel, very strongly, the harsh treatment, which Fenelon received from the court, that it should wound their feelings, and sour them against society in general. Fenelon soothes their resentments, and gives them excellent advice. In a letter to the marquis de Fenelon, one of his great nephews, he says, “ If you can find a sensible friend, one, who really possesses the fear of God, endeavour to alleviate your mortifications, by opening yourself to him, as far as it is prudent ; but be assured, that God is the true friend of the heart, and that there is no comforter like him.—No one so well understands, or so kindly enters into the afflictions of those who have recourse to him ; no one accommodates himself so much to their wants.”

In another letter, he says, “ you must be persuaded of the pleasure it would give me to have you constantly about me, but your duty calls you to Versailles : you should become acquainted with its inhabitants, and they with you. While even my shadow continues on earth, I wish it to be useful to you ; but I am old and at a distance, and our family has now no other help or hope, than what it can derive from your success in the world.—God forbid that I should make you an ambitious man ! But, without being indiscreet or obtrusive, you should put yourself in the way of persons in power, and cultivate all fair opportunities of

attracting their good will. Sometimes idleness, sometimes timidity, sometimes a love of ease, assumes an appearance of modesty, and makes a person retire from commerce with the great, when, in fact, it is mere idleness, or timidity, or a refined self love, which induces him to prefer the company of a few persons, with whom he is at ease, and whom he sees pleased with his society. But this is wrong ;—it is proper to despise the world ; but it is also proper to make it subservient to one's laudable views : it is proper to be detached from it from motives of religion, but there is no merit in abandoning it from sloth and caprice. Attend to it, so far as it is your duty, but do not love it from motives of ambition ; neither neglect it from idleness, nor follow it from vanity." The marquis de Fenelon, to whom this letter was written, appears to have profited by the advice it contained ; he served with distinction in the army, and was appointed ambassador to Holland, in which situation his conduct gave great satisfaction. Many of Fenelon's other relations were happy imitators of his virtues. The abbé de Fenelon, may be particularly mentioned. After a length of years, uniformly devoted to religion and virtue, he retired to Paris, and spent the remainder of his life in endeavouring to procure a religious and moral education for the poor Savoyard boys, with whom, under the ancient government, Paris abounded. Allowing himself no more than was necessary for

his mere subsistence, he contrived, with the remaining part of his income, and, with the contributions which he raised upon his friends, to accomplish this edifying work.—The horrors of the revolution forced him from it, and he retired to the delightful solitude of the Mont St. Valerian. He was pursued to his retreat, and conveyed to the prison of the Luxembourg ; he was then in his eightieth year.—When this became public, all the little Savoyard boys assembled, and went in a body to the National assembly : they loudly petitioned the assembly for his liberty : and offered, that any number of them should be constituted prisoners in his stead, as hostages for his good conduct. This, for a time, delayed his fate : but a day was at length fixed for his execution. One of the poor Savoyards, whom the abbé had instructed and assisted, was, at that time, turnkey of the prison of the Luxembourg. Perceiving his benefactor among the victims led out to execution, he sprang forward, and in a state of distraction, strained him in his embrace, and cried aloud, “ My father ! my father ! are you then going to die ! You, whose life has been an uniform act of goodness ! ” “ Be comforted,” the abbé said to him, “ death is not an evil to him who can no longer do good. My dear child, your sensibility at this moment, comforts my heart. Farewell, my friend ! farewell, Joseph ! think sometimes upon me.”—“ Alas ! ” answered the poor Savoyard, “ I shall never forget you.”

The abbé ascended the fatal cart, with sixty-eight other victims. He exhorted them, during the whole way, to sorrow for their sins, to confide in God, and to offer up to him, with resignation, the sacrifice of their lives. Having arrived at the guillotine, he once more addressed them : he exhorted them to form, with all their hearts, in an act of repentance for their sins : all of them humbly inclined their heads ; he pronounced over them the words of absolution ; and continued to suggest to them sentiments of religion, till it was his turn to submit to the instrument of death.

Notwithstanding the disgrace of Fenelon at court, his virtues attracted the friendship of many respectable persons ; among them, his first biographer, the chevalier Ramsay, deserves particular notice. It has been mentioned, that he was preceptor of the grand-children of our James the second, and that he spent several years in the family of Fenelon. He afterwards obtained leave to return to England, and presented himself to receive an honorary degree of doctor of laws at the university of Oxford. On the day of his installation, two members of the university opposed his election, on the ground of his former connection with the princes of the Stuart family, and his religious principles. The celebrated doctor King advocated his cause. Artfully passing over his connections and religion, he mentioned, with due praise, his writings, and observed that they breathed the purest

principles of religion and virtue : then, addressing himself to the audience, he told them, he had the honour to present to them the disciple of the great Fenelon ; and that title, he said, answered for every thing. This address almost entirely disarmed the opposition ; upon a division, the chevalier was elected by a majority of eighty-five voices to seventeen.

In the disputes on the subject of jansenism, Fenelon appeared several times in print, against the disciples of Jansenius : but, though he combated their errors, he left them in quiet. The duke de St. Simon observes, that throughout the whole diocese of Cambray, the jansenists were unmolested by the archbishop, and gave him no trouble. At this time, the head of the jansenists was father Quesnell, an oratorian. In answer to a letter, which he received from the father, Fenelon writes to him as follows : “ I thank you from the bottom of my heart, for all your civilities. Though I have never had an opportunity of seeing you, or had any correspondence with you, I recollect with pleasure, the desire you expressed, some years since, of paying me a visit at Cambray. I wish you would now put this design in execution. I should receive such a mark of your confidence with the most religious fidelity, and the most sincere attention. I should make it a point never to introduce into our conversation, those subjects on which we differ, except it should be perfectly agreeable to

yourself. Yet with your permission to mention them, I should hope to shew you, with the book in hand, how much they, who profess themselves the disciples of St. Augustine, are opposed to his real doctrine. If we could not bring ourselves to agree upon the points in question, we might, however, give an example of a dispute, carried on without any breach of charity." This appears to be the true language of religion. These amiable overtures of peace to father Quesnell, were the more worthy of praise, as Fenelon considered the jansenists as dangerous enemies of the church. In a letter to the duke de Beauvilliers, he says, "As to the provincial letters of Pascal, I think the prince should read them: in fact, sooner or later he will read them. His curiosity, his taste for entertaining books, and the great reputation of the letters, will not suffer him to remain long in ignorance of them. But I wish all possible precautions should be taken, that he should know what measure of truth they contain, and not be seduced by the appearance of truth, which these letters wear. Part of the memorial, which I send you, furnishes an antidote against the two first letters of Pascal. It is more than sufficient to shew the hidden poison of the letters, and to prove that, in her censures of jansenism, the church does not combat a phantom."

Still, it is among his flock, that Fenelon appears to most advantage: in every sense of the word he

was their father. His establishment and style of living were suitable to his public situation; but far beneath the scale of expence and shew, which even good men would have thought justifiable. This left him an ample income, but it sunk under his acts of beneficence. His principal attention was directed towards the labouring peasantry; he appears to have felt strongly the hardship of their lot. A curate complained to him, that, after the evening service of Sunday, his parishioners, in spite of his remonstrances, would dance; "My dear friend," replied Fenelon, "neither you nor I should dance; but let us leave these poor people to dance as they please; their hours of happiness are not too numerous."

During the contest for the Spanish succession, the diocese of Cambray was often the theatre of war, and of course experienced the cruel ravages of advancing and retreating armies. Under these circumstances, Fenelon frequently made visitations of every part of his diocese: and all the writers of his life mention a singular mark of homage, which was shewn, on these occasions, to his eminent virtue. "From their high respect for his character," says M. de Bausset, "from their general admiration of Telemachus, and possibly from a secret wish of revenging the archbishop of Cambray, against the injustice of Lewis the fourteenth, the hostile armies permitted Fenelon to visit every part of his diocese. The English, Germans, and Dutch, rivalled the

inhabitants of Cambray in veneration for the archbishop. All distinctions of religion and sect, all feelings of hatred or jealousy, which divide nations, disappeared in his presence. He was often obliged to have recourse to artifice to avoid the honours, which the armies of the enemy intended him. He refused the military escorts which were offered him, for his personal security in the exercise of his functions; and, without any other attendant, than a few ecclesiastics, he traversed the countries desolated by war. His way was marked by his alms and benefactions, and by the suspense of the calamities, which armies bring. In these short intervals, the people breathed in peace, so that his pastoral visits might be termed the Truce of God."

In one of these visits he met a peasant, still young, but plunged in the deepest affliction. He had recently lost a cow, the only support of his indigent family. Fenelon attempted to comfort him, and by giving him money to buy another, alleviated his sorrow; still he had lost his own cow, and the tear continued to fall. Pursuing his journey, Fenelon found the very cow, which was the object of so much affliction; and, like the good shepherd, he himself drove it back before him, in a dark night, to the young man's cottage. "This," says the cardinal de Maury, "is perhaps the finest trait in Fenelon's life. Woe to those who read it without being affected!"

"The virtues of Fenelon," continues the car-

dinal, “give his history something of the air of romance: but his name will never die. To this moment,—the Flemminders bless his memory, and call him the Good Archbishop.”

CHAP. XVI.

*The latter Years of the Life of Fenelon :
his Death in 1715.*

YEAR after year, Fenelon continued in this noiseless tenor of well-regulated, and edifying virtue, beloved and revered by his whole diocese, and by every person, to whom his wise and exemplary conduct was known. Still the indignation of his royal master against him continued unabated: the court was shut against his relations; his friends, with the exception of the duke of Beauvilliers, and the duke of Chevreuse, were discountenanced, and it was generally understood that the name of Fenelon was never to be pronounced at Versailles. But, nothing could weaken the duke of Burgundy's attachment to him. The preceptor and the royal pupil corresponded frequently; and when, in 1702, Lewis the fourteenth gave the duke of Burgundy the command of the army in Flanders, the duke petitioned him, with great earnestness, that he might be allowed, in his passage to the army, to see Fenelon; the monarch consented, with an

express condition, that their interview should be public. The duke apprized Fenelon of the circumstance by an affectionate letter. When the courier who carried the letter to him arrived at Cambray, Fenelon had left it, from a motive of delicacy, not to put himself, unmasked, in the way of the duke. They met at a public dinner, at the town-house of Cambray; it was evident that they were observed, and every thing passed in great ceremony. Once or twice, Fenelon said something to enliven the conversation, but it did not succeed. According to etiquette, he presented the duke, at the end of dinner, with a napkin to wipe his hands: the duke received it, returned it to him, but could no longer contain himself:—then turning to the archbishop, and raising his voice, loud enough to be heard by all persons present, he said to him, “ I am sensible, my lord archbishop, what I owe to you; and you know what I am.” They met once more; but letters passed frequently between them. Nothing can be more affectionate than the letters which the duke wrote to Fenelon. “ My love of virtue,” he writes in one of them, “ continues, and I think, gains strength; but I have many faults. Do you assist me with your advice, and prayers; into mine, you come every day; but you will easily suppose I don’t pray for you in a very loud voice. I say nothing of my dispositions in your regard: they are always the same. If the abbé de Langeron be at Cambray, say to him a

little kind word from me, but recommend silence to him." Fenelon's letters to the duke abound with good advice. "Religion," he writes him, "does not consist in a scrupulous observance of little forms, but in the steady observance of the duties proper for one's state ; a great prince is not to serve God in the same manner as a hermit, or an obscure individual. I must tell you the truth ; the public esteems you, respects you, forms great hopes of you, and wishes to see you without fault : but the public thinks you stern, timid, and scrupulous, and that you have not the talent of uniting moderation and firmness in your decisions. Shew them they are mistaken : if you wish that religion should be honoured, let yours be simple, accommodating, sensible, noble, enlightened, proper for your rank. You cannot regulate the court or the army, as you might a religious community. I am glad you see, by your own experience, what war really is ; how much it is to be dreaded ; how the greatest armies often prove unserviceable ; how easily the most splendid monarchies are shaken : how rigorously princes, in the midst of the incense of their flatterers, are censured by the public. While despotism abounds with ways and means, it acts with more promptitude and energy than a limited monarchy ; but, as soon as the ways and means begin to fail, it sinks for ever. When despotism becomes bankrupt, how are you to expect that the venal herd, who have fattened so long on the spoils of their country,

will, by their exertion in her support, expose themselves to ruin. Should you ever come to the throne, you should wish to be the father, not the master of your people. You should know that all were not made for one ; that the one was made for all, and to work for the happiness of all.”

One is at a loss, whom most to admire, the preceptor, who so eloquently taught, or the royal youth, who so willingly listened to these excellent lessons.

It appears, that, for the duke's information, Fenelon committed to paper the heads of a project for remedying the abuses of the French government. He evidently saw that the time was come, when public opinion called loudly for an intermediate body between the monarch and the people, to attach them more to each other, and to increase the general interest of the public in the welfare of their country. With this view, Fenelon suggested an assembly of the notables ; and for this suggestion M. de Bausset thinks Fenelon requires an apology ; and he accordingly makes an elaborate apology for him.

The humanity and attentions which Fenelon shewed to the sufferers in the war in Flanders, endeared him to the whole nation. “Charity,” says the duke de St. Simon, “was among Fenelon's most striking virtues : it embraced equally, the rich, the poor, his friends, and his enemies. He found frequent occasions for the exertion of it in the

crowds of the wounded and sick, who, in the wars in Flanders, were carried, in great numbers, to Cambray. He was regular in his visitations of the hospitals, shewed constant attention to the lowest officers, and generally, during their illness, lodged a considerable number of the principal officers in his palace. Like a true shepherd of Christ, he watched continually over their spiritual welfare. The fine manners, which his habits of high life gave him, attached them to him, and none of them ever had occasion to repent of the confidence which he reposed in Fenelon. In sickness, and in health, they always found him willing to listen to their humble confessions, and anxious to replace them in the path of virtue. If the lowest person in the hospital requested his attendance, Fenelon never refused his request. Their corporeal necessities were equally an object of his compassionate zeal. Broths, meat, physic, comfortable food of every description, and always of the best kind, were sent them, in well regulated plenty, from his palace. Fenelon presided at the consultations of the physicians, with the tender concern of a warm and kind friend. It is impossible to conceive how greatly he became the idol of the military, and how Versailles, in spite of her stern master, resounded with his name. It happened that the commissariat was in extreme want of corn for the troops : the archbishop emptied his granaries for their subsistence, and refused to be paid. On that occasion, Lewis the fourteenth

himself became his panegyrist. His charity and polite attentions extended equally to the prisoners of war, as to his countrymen. In all he did, there was an indescribable propriety; the true episcopal character appeared in it; and virtue herself became more beautiful, from Fenelon's manner of being virtuous.

The death of the dauphin, advanced his royal pupil to the rank next the throne; and the good effects of the education he had received from Fenelon, were then perceived by all. From that moment the duke appeared to be every thing which the nation wished. He threw off his reserve, did the honours of the court with majesty and gracefulness. His easy, instructive, and well adapted conversation, charmed the better kind of courtiers, pleased every ear, gained every heart, shewed his talents, and the use which it was to be expected he would make of them. He was never wanting in attention to birth, to age, to natural or acquired endowments; it is wonderful, with what rapidity he gained universal esteem, admiration, and love. The joy of the public made it the theme of every conversation. Is this the man, they asked, till lately so reserved, and unaccommodating?—The dukes of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse answered, He is the man; he is the very man we always knew him to be; but the time is now arrived, when it is proper for him to unfold his real character; and, such as you now see him, such you will ever find him.

It will easily be supposed, that, from this moment, all the attention of the courtiers, veered to the acknowledged friends of the duke of Burgundy. The dauphin died in April, and that very spring revealed at Cambray, to the happy and delighted flock, the change which had taken place at Versailles, in their pastor's regard.—Cambray immediately became the general road to the army of Flanders ; every person of rank, who served in it, found some reason for passing through Cambray, and prolonging his stay there, as long as he could find a real or pretended cause.

But the hopes, which the duke of Burgundy raised, he was destined not to realize : he died in 1712, and was regretted by the whole kingdom. His eyes were scarcely closed, when Lewis the fourteenth ordered that his papers should be brought to him ; he examined them with minute and anxious attention, and burned them with his own hands. Madame de Maintenon informed the duke de Beauvilliers of this circumstance : she adds, “ I am sorry they are burned ; nothing so beautiful or so good was ever written : if the prince, whose loss we deplore, had some faults, it was not because the councils given him, were feeble, or because he was too much flattered. Well may we say, that those who keep the strait path shall not be confounded.” One important manuscript, the *Directions for the Conscience of a King*, happened to be in the hands of the duke de Beauvilliers, and

thus escaped the flames. Every line of it breathes moderation and virtue ; every line censures ostentation, inordinate love of glory, thirst of conquest, injustice, luxury, yielding to flattery, and the wish of absolute power. It was not printed till several years after Fenelon's decease, when a superb impression of it was printed by the marquis de Fenelon, then ambassador at the Hague. The court of Versailles took the alarm, and peremptorily ordered the marquis to suppress all the copies : he obeyed the order, preserving two copies of it only ; one of which found its way to the library of M. Gaignat, and is noticed by de Bure. A surreptitious edition of it was published at the Hague in 1747 ; but, in 1774, it was published at Paris, with the express permission of Lewis the sixteenth.

WE are now arrived at the term of our biography :—and cannot close it better than in the words of the duke de St. Simon. “ Fenelon,” says the duke, “ survived his disciple two years. Neither in the life-time of the prince, nor after his decease, did a word once escape Fenelon, which shewed regret for what he had lost, or a wish concerning the future. Concentrated in his pastoral duties, he died, if the expression may be allowed, in the field of honour. Returning from an episcopal visit, his coach was overturned ; no one was wounded, and he himself run no particular danger : but the shock was too great for his feeble frame.

When he arrived at Cambray, he was feverish, and in a few days, was beyond the reach of remedy. During his whole illness, he appeared insensible to what he quitted, and occupied only with the thought of what he was going to find. Penetrated with the most lively sentiments of religion, he placed his soul in the hands of God, with a resignation full of confidence and humility. He wrote a letter to the king, containing no request for himself, but earnestly recommending to him, the wants of his diocese.—Lewis the fourteenth declared, on perusing the letter, that he had never read any thing more affecting, or more worthy of the last moments of a bishop. Fenelon died at the age of 65, in the arms of his friends, and his clergy, mourned by all his diocese, equally lamented by catholics and protestants.—To complete his eulogium, he left behind him, neither debt nor money.”

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

MYSTICAL THEOLOGY.

IN the preceding sketch of the Life of FENELON, much is necessarily said on Quietism. As quietism is an abuse of what is called, by roman-catholic spiritualists, *Mystical Theology*, and, without some notion of mystical theology, the nature of the errors of the quietists cannot be understood, the following account of it is now submitted to the reader:—it is needless to premise, that the writer is treating of a subject, which he does not understand.

To the best of his power, however, he will attempt to give,—I. 1st, A definition of *Mystical Theology*; 2dly, some account of the three states of the just,—the purgative, the illuminative, and the contemplative or unitive; 3dly, some account of the spiritual comforts said to attend each state; 4thly, and particularly, some account of the spiritual comforts of the contemplative or unitive state; 5thly, some account of the trials of the soul in that state; 6thly, some account of her rewards, and 7thly, some account of her passive prayer.

II. Some mention will then be made, 1st, of the nature of the passages in the Old and New Testaments, which are thought to refer to the mystical union of the soul with God; 2dly, some mention of the principal writers on mystical theology among the ancient fathers; 3dly, some mention of the principal writers, in the middle age, who have treated of it; and 4thly, some account of the later school of mysticism.—5thly, mention will then be made of some contemplative writers, who, without attempting to describe this mystical union of the soul with God, have inculcated a general detachment from earthly affections, and treated on the holy peace of the soul.

III. After which, the writer will transcribe from Touron, *Histoire des Hommes illustres de l'ordre de St. Dominique*, Tom. II. p. 335, an account of a remarkable incident in the life of Dr. Thaulere, one of the most eminent of mystic writers, as it shews, in a very striking manner, the nature of the spiritual inanition, which they so much describe and recommend.

I.

1. Mystical Theology is *defined* to be an union of the soul with God,—so intimate, that her essence is, in a manner, transformed into the essence of God, and, in consequence of it, she beholds him, not intuitively, as he is seen by the blessed in heaven, but, in a divine light; and she believes in him, hopes in him, and loves him, not by particular or discursive acts, but in silent affection and adoration.

2. From an early period of christianity to the present time, *Three States of the Just* are noticed by her writers; at a later period, they were distinguished into the Purgative, the Illuminative, and the Contemplative or

Unitive. The first,—which took its appellation from Aristotle's doctrine of the purgation of the passions,—is supposed to comprehend those, who have made their first advances in a spiritual life ; who assiduously bewail their sins, are careful to avoid relapsing into them, endeavour to destroy their bad habits, and extinguish their passions ; who fast, watch and pray, and are blessed with a contrite and humble heart. The second,—is supposed to include those, who divest themselves of earthly affections, study to acquire purity of heart, and a constant habit of virtue, the true light of the soul ; who assiduously meditate on the life and doctrines of Christ, and inflame themselves by it, to the imitation of his virtues. Those are supposed to be arrived at the third state, whose souls, thus illuminated, are dead to the world, are united to God, and enjoy his holy peace.

3. Even in the first stage of a spiritual life, the *comfort*, which the soul experiences, exceeds the joys of this world. With Bourdaloue, (*Sur la choix mutuelle de Dieu et de l'ame religieuse*), she exclaims, “ I have chosen God, and God has chosen me ; this reflection is my support and strength ; it will enable me to surmount every difficulty, to resist every temptation, to rise above every chagrin and disgust.” From the moment, in which this choice is made, “ the soul,” according to the same eloquent preacher, (in his *sermon for the feast of St. Mary Magdalen*), “ begins to enjoy a sweet tranquillity ; conscience begins to experience the interior joy of pious hope and confidence in the mercies of God, and to feel the holy unction of grace. In the midst of her penitential austerities, she comforts and strengthens herself by the thought, that she is making some satisfaction and atonement to God for her sins ; that she is purifying her heart, and disposing

“ it to receive the communications of heaven.” This comfort and sensation of happiness must necessarily increase, in proportion as the soul is illuminated, as the charms of virtue are unveiled to her, and her interior is filled with God. “ Who can express,” says Bourdaloue, “ the secret delight which God bestows on a heart thus purified and prepared! How he delights her! What holy sentiments and transports he excites in her!” But, when she lives for God alone, then, in the language of the spiritualists, God communicates himself to her, and her happiness, as far as happiness is attainable in this life, is complete. Here begins the contemplative or unitive state.

4. What, in this state of *union*, passes between God and the soul, the most eminent spiritualists acknowledge their inability to describe. All of them admit that the language and images, by which they attempt to represent it, though they should be the best that industry and eloquence can supply, must fall infinitely short of what they wish to express. Still, for the edification and instruction of the faithful, of those particularly who may think themselves called to it, they attempt to describe it as far as language allows.

They inform us that, though it sometimes pleases Almighty God to elevate a soul, at once, to the sublimest contemplation, he generally leads her to it by the degrees we have mentioned. For each of them, the soul disposes herself by prayer, penance and submission to the divine will: the fear and love of God enter into each of them; and each has its vicissitudes of spiritual joy and spiritual trial. The passage into each requires exertion and perseverance, and none of them can be attained without holy violence. To obtain a contrite and humble heart, the foundation of all virtue, requires many an arduous

effort, many a painful sacrifice. As the soul advances in virtue, her combats continue, temptations to vanity, to gratifications of sense and dissipation of thought press on her, and appear to multiply: she flies from them to the foot of the cross; the more she takes of it upon her, the more she has to support of its weight; but she perseveres, and begins to taste how sweet the Almighty is to those who truly seek him.—Still, much imperfection hangs upon her, and self love enters too much into her best actions. Self love itself she finally subdues; and this leads her to the happy state of union with the Almighty, which, according to the writers of whom we are speaking, forms the just man's last and happiest state in this life.

5. But, for the passage into it, the most heroic exertions and sacrifices are necessary: the soul must completely die to the world and herself, and obtain a complete victory over all that draws, or even has a remote tendency to draw her from God. Persecution from the world at large, from those who are most dear to her, repeated mortifications and bitter external and internal *trials* of every kind, are the means, which God generally uses to effect her final purification! But, by far the severest trial with which he visits her, is the spiritual night, as it is termed by those writers, through which he generally makes her pass. In that state she is assailed by the strongest temptations; she often seems to herself to be on the brink of yielding to them, and sometimes fears she has yielded; the most blasphemous thoughts, the most irregular ideas, crowd her mind; she feels, or rather apprehends she feels, a complacency in them; God seems, to her, to abandon her; she no longer beholds in him her Father, her Redeemer, the Shepherd who leads to the green pasture or the living water; she

views him armed with terrors, conceives herself an object of his wrath, and, in indescribable anguish, fears it will be her everlasting lot. Still she perseveres : in the midst of this agonizing suffering she is invariably patient, invariably humble, invariably resigned, and, even when she seems to herself to sink under the harrowing impression of her being an eternal object of divine wrath, and fears all is lost, (her last and heaviest trial), she habitually trusts herself to his mercy, and abandons herself to his holy will. Then, she is nailed to the sacred cross : she dies to the world, to herself, to all that is not God, and her sacrifice is complete.

But, as these writers assure us, in the midst of this severe visitation, God is ever near her, and enriches her with the most pure and exalted virtues. She acquires an habitual conformity to his holy will, a perfect indifference to all actions and objects, except as they please or displease him : on him alone she is occupied, with him alone she is filled ; she loves him for himself ; and the divine transformation, so beautifully described by St. Paul, when he exclaims, Gal. xi. 2.—“ It is not I “ that live, it is Christ that liveth in me,” then ensues.

Such are the spiritual favours, which, in this hour of desolation, while she herself is not only unconscious of them, but actually fears herself an object of wrath, this humble and afflicted soul is said, by these writers, to receive from the unbounded mercy of God ; and such, they inform us, are the exalted gifts, with which her perseverance is crowned. Often, she continues, for several years in this state of trial, and the spiritualists who describe it, speak of it as exceeding every species of corporal pain.

6. But her hour of *reward* at length arrives :—God then showers on her an abundance of those sacred

favours, which the same writers inform us, no tongue can adequately tell, and those only can conceive, who have had some experience of them. Wonderfully her intellect is enlightened on divine subjects, her will animated by divine love, her memory radiated by the recollection of the divine mercies. Her appetites are so governed by the Holy Spirit, as to be subservient to her religious perfection, her very corporal existence partakes of the holy jubilation of her soul, and rejoiceth with her, in God her Saviour. She beholds, not intuitively, as they are beholden by the angels and saints, but in a divine light, the adorable essence, the sacred mysteries of the Trinity and incarnation, the unspeakable perfections of God, and the wisdom and justice of his ways with man. He admits her to habitual and intimate communications with him : “Frequent,” says the author of the imitation of Christ, (lib. 2. c. 1.), “are the visits of God to such a soul, sweet his conversation with her, grateful the consolations, unspeakable the peace, which he brings to her, wonderful the familiarity which he vouchsafes her :” her joy is pure and passeth understanding. Surrounded by the light and power of divine love, she lives, and feels, and moves in God alone.

It is particularly in her prayer that she experiences these favours.—Generally speaking, the incipient in a spiritual life begins with vocal prayer, and at first, contents himself with attentively reading those forms of prayer, which books supply. “These,” Bossuet observes, *Instruction sur les états d’oraison*, (lib. 5. sec. 21.), “rather inform the understanding than enter into the heart : but such prayers have abundant use ; they resemble the bark of a tree that covers and invigorates the sap which circulates under it ; they are like the

“ snow, which is spread over the corn, and enriches the
“ lands from which the corn draws its nourishment.”

Insensibly he rises to meditation: at first, he avails himself of some collection of published meditations, dwells on what he reads, amplifies it in his mind, and excites his heart to follow and expand the sentiment which it produces. By degrees, he trusts to himself, and his reflections and sentiments are his own; but, for a long time, his understanding and imagination are more engaged by them than his heart, and the whole is a work of exertion. In the course of time, devotion becomes habitual to him, and motives of love, of admiration, of humility, of humble hope and chastened fear, gently, but irresistibly, fill his heart; and the soul, with little exertion of the intellectual faculties, of which she herself is sensible, receives and returns the purest, noblest, and most exalted sentiments of divine love.

7. At times, she is favoured with what ascetics term, the prayer of contemplation, or supernatural or *passive prayer*. All christian prayer, they observe, is grounded in faith, nurtured by hope, and perfected by charity, and is therefore the fruit of supernatural grace; but, in the prayer of contemplation, the influx of the Holy Ghost excites the soul to divine love, so powerfully, that external objects lose their natural operation on her, a kind of suspense of her faculties ensues, and she receives passively, and without any effort on her side, of which she herself is sensible, the impressions, which her contemplation of the Deity, of his adorable perfections and of his boundless love makes in her:—it is in this sense, that the prayer of contemplation, particularly, is said to be passive.

Like the other stages of prayer, it has its degrees. In all of them, the soul is rather passive than active, and,

without any sensible exertion, receives in holy quiet and repose, the divine visitation. Exalted by his mercy to a pure and undisturbed contemplation of him, she beholds him infinite in his perfections; all goodness, all wisdom, all power. Abandoning herself to his will, and humbly confident in his mercy, she remains before him in silent adoration and love, without fear or desire, and indifferent to all that is not God or the will of God. The highest degrees of this sublime prayer are called, by the writers on this subject, the Prayer of Quiet, and the Prayer of Union. In the former, the intellect is more employed than in the latter. The prayer of union is the sublimest degree of prayer to be attained in this life, and, in describing it, ordinary language, which the mystical writer has long found inadequate for the expression of his ideas, absolutely deserts him, and metaphor and allusion are his only support. The soul, as he describes it, then enters the cloud with Moses, or, as cardinal Bona expresses it, she is conducted into the vast solitude of the divinity, and sees, and hears, and feels unutterable things. An enlarged knowledge of the divine increated Good is infused into her; she is penetrated with an exquisitely sweet, but wholly indescribable, sensation of his love for her, and of her own fervent and humble return of love to him. It seldom happens that this period of unspeakable delight is long; but it leaves in the soul a sovereign contempt and loathing of the world and its vanities, an ardent desire of beholding, in eternity, the author of her happiness, a firm but submissive hope of this blessing, and a painful but patient sense of its delay. The fear and love of God increase as she advances to her mortal term, and, in the mean time, she lives with God, and for him alone. "The virtuous man," says Father Nouet, (*l'Homme*

d'Oraison, deuxieme Retraite, p. 16), “ who resigns his
 “ own will to the will of God, has his mind so en-
 “ lightened, and his heart so magnanimous and generous,
 “ that he despises all which he before admired : all his
 “ delight is in heavenly things : God is all his joy,
 “ felicity and happiness ; and, in return, God finds in
 “ him, joy, pleasure, and delight. In beholding him,
 “ the Father says, this is my beloved, in whom I am
 “ well pleased : the Son says, this is my brother : the
 “ Holy Ghost says, I am the spouse of his soul. The
 “ three divine persons associate him to their throne, and
 “ sometimes place their sceptre of Almighty power in
 “ his hands, to work miracles and command nature.”

All approved writers, who write on these high states of prayer, declare their total inability to define or describe them in adequate terms, or to give even a notion of them to those, to whom prayer is not a familiar employment. After some exposition of them, cardinal Bona expresses himself in these terms : “ Omitto plura
 “ hujus unionis eaque abdita, ac inexpertis incredibilia
 “ mysteria, mysticos contemplationis excessus.—Hæc
 “ secretioris sapientiæ sacramenta, ignaris relata, fidem
 “ amittunt, iisque duntaxat perspecta sunt, qui, in hujus
 “ gradus summitate, pace fruuntur.”

All approved writers on this subject also agree, that though the sublime prayer of contemplation is often the reward of heroic virtue, the basis of which is perfect humility and perfect purity of mind and heart, many persons of the most eminent virtue do not receive it ; that, though in some manner it may be regulated, it cannot, in the slightest degree, be acquired by human precept ; that, generally, it is presumptuous to desire it, and that those, who conceive themselves to be favoured with it, should abstain, almost wholly, from making it

a subject of conversation, and only mention it on very extraordinary occasions. In an admirable letter of father Bourdaloue, published by M. de Bausset, in a note to the first volume of the Life of Fenelon, he says, “ Ce que serait a souhaiter dans le siecle où nous sommes, “ ce serait, qu’on parlat peu de ces matieres, et que les “ ames même, qui pourraient être veritablement dans “ l’oraison de contemplation, ne s’en expliquassent “ jamais entre elles, et encore même rarement avec “ leurs peres spirituels.”

II.

I. Such, (but very faintly, and very inadequately described in the foregoing lines), is the sacred contemplation, of which, in holy biography, so much is said.—For the existence of a regular chain of writers upon it, from the beginning of the world to the present time, modern mystics strenuously contend.

1. In the *Old Testament*, they find mysticism in those texts where Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and the other patriarchs are described as walking before and conversing with God; and in those, where the Psalmist describes his soul to be always in the presence of God, and mentions that he always walks in his sight. In the *New Testament*, they find mysticism in the passages in the epistles of St. Paul and St. John, in which, (as in 2 Cor. c. 3. v. 18.), St. Paul mentions that “ beholding “ God without a veil, we are transformed into the same “ image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of our “ Lord;” or in which, (as in his first epistle, c. 3. v. 2.), St. John says that, “ God is love; and that he who “ abideth in love, abideth in God, and God in him.”

2. From the writings of the *Apostolic Fathers*, particularly of St. Ignatius the bishop of Antioch, and the

writings of other *Fathers of the first Century*, several expressions are cited by mystical writers, which appear to show, that mystical theology, in the same sense, in which it is spoken of by more modern writers, was known to them. In the second century, it appears more clearly and systematically expressed in the writings of St. Clement, the bishop of Alexandria. A work, with the title, *On Mystical Theology*, ascribed by some very respectable writers to St. Dionysius the Areopagite, and certainly written before the fifth century, treats fully and distinctly of mystical theology, and unequivocally professes to show, that, by disengaging the affections from all sensible things, the soul can be raised, as it is termed, by the writer, "to the contemplation of the "divine obscurity, the incomprehensible Godhead."

That mystical devotion was common among the *Fathers of the Desert*, is, say the advocates of mysticism, clear from the writings of Cassian.

From the time we have mentioned, few traces of it, they generally admit, are discoverable among the writers of the Latin church, till the year 767, when Pope Paul sent a copy of the treatise of St. Dionysius the Areopagite to Lewis the Debonnaire, and that monarch circulated it among the clergy of France, by whom it was generally read and approved. Photius mentions St. Dionysius, as "a disciple of St. Paul, powerful and "sublime in oratory, but greater in contemplation." In 860, the works of St. Dionysius were translated from the Greek into the Latin language, by the order of Charles the Bald.

The writings of St. John Climachus, *the last of the Greek*, and of St. Bernard, *the last of the Latin fathers*, abound with mystical elevation, and it never appears to more advantage, than in the writings of the latter.

3. In the *Middle Age*, mystical theology soon fell into the hands of the scholastic divines, particularly the two St. Victors, Hugo and Richard, St. Thomas of Aquin, and Albert the Great : but, while it was discussed by these writers, with the accuracy and refinement of scholars, it was expressed in a more free and devotional manner by some of their contemporaries. Among those, St. Bonaventure, Thaulerus, Rusbrock and Dionysius the Carthusian are particularly distinguished. To Thaulerus, the mystical writers are particularly partial ; and it is observable that he is always mentioned by Luther in terms of the highest commendation. “ If you wish,” says Luther, in a letter to Spalatinus, (Tom. I. p. 23,) “ to read ancient and pure “ theology in your native German, purchase Thaulerus, “ the Dominican monk ; no where, either in the Latin “ or in the German language, is more pure, more “ wholesome, or more scriptural theology to be found.”

A little before the time of which we are now speaking, some errors, from which the worst consequences clearly followed, were introduced into mysticism by a sect called Bogards. Two of their errors may be thought to deserve a particular mention ; the first, that a person may, in this life, acquire so high a state of perfection, as to become absolutely impeccable, and incapable of advancing in virtue ; the second, that, in this state of perfection, prayer is unnecessary. Their errors were condemned in 1311, at the general council of Vienne, at which Pope Clement the fifth presided in person.

Thaulerus wrote against the Bogards : he was highly celebrated for his extensive and profound learning ; Rusbrock, on the contrary, was perfectly ignorant of the science of the schools, and many of the most

objectionable passages, in the writings of the mystics, are taken from his works. Some passages of this description were objected both to Thaulerus and Rusbrock by Gerson, the celebrated chancellor of Paris: in Harpius, a Franciscan friar of Mechlin, they met with an able advocate. With St. John of the Cross, and particularly with St. Theresa, this line of mystic writers respectably closes. It is admitted, that no mystic writer appears to have been more highly gifted, or to have expressed himself with greater precision than St. Theresa: her works are written with great fire, and in an excellent taste: they abound with judicious remarks, and the best Spanish writers inform us, that the style of them is most elegant and correct.

Among the writers of these times, the mystics are proud of numbering in their list, St. Catharine of Sienna, St. Catharine of Genoa, and the blessed Angela of Foligni.

4. The *later school of mysticism* began soon after the decease of St. Theresa, and has continued to the present time. It commences with St. Francis of Sales, whose treatise on the Love of God, has, of all mystical works, been the most read. "He paints in it," says the author of the *Lives of the Saints*, "his own soul. He describes the feeling sentiments of divine love, its state of fervour, of dryness, of trials, suffering and darkness: in explaining which, he calls in philosophy to his assistance. He writes on this sublime subject, what he had learned by his own experience. Some parts of the book are only to be understood by those, who have gone through these states; yet the author has ever been admired for the performance. The General of the Carthusians had wrote to him, upon his introduction to a devout life, advising him to write

“no more, because nothing could equal that book : but
“seeing this, he bade him never cease writing ;—and
“James I. was so delighted with the book, that he expressed a great desire to see the author.” Those, who wish to read the celebrated work of St. Francis of Sales on the Love of God, should procure the edition of it by Father Bignon. The edition of it, published at Lyons, in 1628, by Drobet, was adulterated, and, on the complaint of the brother of the saint, was suppressed, by the order of Lewis XIII. A correct and true edition of the work was printed at Lyons, by Courcellys, in 1629 ; but the faulty edition, with its additions and interpolations, has been often reprinted, which makes it the more desirable to procure the edition of Father Bignon. The errors of the Bogards have been mentioned : the present is the place for mentioning the errors of the quietists. They were a modification of the errors of the Bogards. The patriarch of them was Michael de Molinos : his errors were condemned by Innocent XI. in 1680 ; semi-quietism was a modification of the errors of Molinos ; it was justly charged on the writings of Madame de Guyon ; and certainly some expressions used by Fenelon are tinged with it.

Mystical writers, subsequent to the time of St. Francis of Sales, may be divided into those who preceded, and those who were subsequent to, the disputes in which Fenelon was engaged.—The most eminent of the former are father Surin and cardinal Bona. In the disputes of quietism, both Bossuet and Fenelon appealed to the writings of father Surin, and each pronounced them to be free from reproach. They were first printed with the formal approbation of Bossuet. They consist principally of his *Fondemens de la Vie*

Spirituelle, 1 vol. 8vo. ; his *Catechisme Spirituel*, 2 vols. 8vo. edited by father Bignon, and his *Letters*, 2 vols. 12mo.—In the first of his letters, he mentions, that one of the most sublime contemplatives he ever knew, was a journeyman in a working trade, with whom he happened to travel in a French diligence ; and we find from Boudon's letters, that he afterwards became a lay-brother amongst the Capuchins.—The mystical writings of cardinal Bona deserve the highest praise, for the accuracy of their doctrine, their affecting piety, extensive erudition, and exquisite Latinity. It may be doubted whether, since the days of the younger Pliny, any Latin author has written in verse or prose with greater elegance. Yet it may be questioned, whether the subject is treated in any work so perspicuously, (though with great brevity), as in the *Catechisme de Therese, contenant toute la Doctrine necessaire pour la Vie spirituelle, Bruxelles*, 1675.

5. The disputes between Bossuet and Fenelon brought mysticism into disrepute. *Contemplative writers* since that time have cautiously abstained from entering into any detailed account of the gifts of contemplative prayer, and seem to confine themselves to exhortations to habitual recollection of the presence of God, humility, self-denial, retirement, and detachment from worldly objects, and to moving descriptions of the blessings, which the peace of God confers on those who enjoy it.

Of this description of writers, but long anterior in time to the period of which we are now speaking, is the author of the *Imitation of Christ*. "That," says Fontenelle, "is the most excellent book which ever came from the hand of man, the gospel being of divine original." This is the highest eulogium that any work has received, and the justice of the eulogium

is universally admitted. Valart founds an argument against the claim of Thomas-à-Kempis to be its author, on the supposed inequality of the acknowledged works of that writer, which, he says, are extremely flat: but the justice of this censure was denied by the late Mr. Alban Butler, the author of the *Lives of the Saints*: he always spoke in terms of the highest commendation of the treatises of Thomas-à-Kempis, *de Vera Compunctione*, and *de Tribus Tabernaculis*.

The doctrine of this celebrated book, in a more modern dress, but with much of the beautiful simplicity of the original, is elegantly expanded by father Neuville, in his *Morale de l'Evangile*, 4 vols. 8vo.; by father Gonnellieu, in his *Pratique de la Vie Interieure*, 1 vol. 8vo. *L'Exercise de la Vie Interieure*, 1 vol. 8vo. and his *translation into French of the Imitation of Christ*, 1 vol. 8vo.; by father Lombez, in his *Traite sur la Paix Interieure*, 1 vol. 12mo, and in *La vraie et solide Pieté de St. Françoise de Sales*, 1 vol. 8vo.

It is wished, that we had, in a more modern dress, the treatises of father Nieremberg, a Spanish jesuit, "*Of Adoration in Spirit and Truth*, translated in 1623," and containing (see particularly his chapter of the excellency of one that is in the state of grace), as lofty a strain of devotion as was ever expressed on paper; and of the *Ladder of Perfection of Walter Hilton*, a Carthusian of Bethlehem monastery on the Thames, in 1433, published by Mr. Woodhead, (see the *Lives of the Saints*, 10 vol. p. 41.) The *Sancta Sophia* of father Baker, a Benedictine monk, and *Philotheus's Pilgrimage to Perfection, in a practice of ten days solitude*, Bruges, 1668, were once popular among English roman-catholics. The *Saints Lives* mentioned in a preceding page abound in contemplative lore.

III.

THE high terms, in which many spiritual writers of great celebrity have expressed themselves of *Dr. Taulere*, induced the writer of these pages to make some inquiry respecting his life and writings. The only account which he has found of them, is in *Touron's Histoire des Hommes illustres de l'Ordre de St. Dominique*, Tom. II. p. 335. It contains little more than a mention of one very remarkable incident in Taulere's life.

It appears that Taulere was born in 1294; and that, soon after the elevation of John the 22d. to the papacy, he entered the order of St. Dominick. He travelled into France, and was raised to the rank of Doctor, in the University of Cologne. His natural and acquired endowments soon made him noticed in the schools. His zeal, and the commands of his superiors, engaged him in the apostolical ministry. The cities of Strasbourg and Cologne were the first scenes of his labours; and his reputation spread from them, over all Germany and the adjacent territories.

Taulere was most assiduous in the discharge of his functions; incessantly employed in teaching the truths of religion, in exhorting sinners to repentance, and advancing the good in virtue. The time, which was not thus employed, he gave to prayer, or the study of the scriptures. Whenever he preached, the churches were crowded with hearers; persons of the highest rank, of the greatest reputation for talent, of the most distinguished piety, placed themselves under his direction.

“But,” says the writer of his life, “Taulere, was, all this time, very different in the eye of God, from what

“ he appeared to the public and himself. A subtle
“ pride, of which he himself was scarcely sensible, cor-
“ rupted all his actions, and was leading him to ruin ;
“ but it pleased the Almighty to snatch him from the
“ precipice.” He was then in his fiftieth year.

At this time, continues our author, a poor layman, destitute of secular learning, but deeply versed in the science of the saints, dwelt in Germany, at a distance of about fifty miles from Cologne : and it pleased the Almighty to make him the instrument of his merciful designs on Taulere. God revealed to this layman, his intentions in respect to Taulere, and ordered him to repair immediately to Cologne, and there to conduct himself in the commission intrusted to him as the Holy Spirit should suggest. He disclosed to him, the real state of Taulere’s interior ; his good qualities, his defects, and what was wanting to make him a perfect follower of Christ.

Without delay, the layman repaired to Cologne. He attended at a sermon preached by Taulere ; and, when it was finished, he presented himself before Taulere, and requested him to be his spiritual director, while he should stay in that city : Taulere assented to his request ; and the layman spent three months in prayer and penance under his direction.

At the end of them, he beseeched Taulere to preach a sermon on the best means of attaining the height of spiritual perfection. “ Why,” said Taulere, “ do you
“ make this request to me ? What will *you* understand
“ of a discourse which necessarily must be so sublime ?” The layman humbly replied, that, though he might not be capable of understanding such sublime speculations, he might, nevertheless, be moved by them to desire, with humility, the perfection, which they

inculcated : “ and, perhaps,” he said, “ there may be “ among the audience, some one to whom such a discourse may be essentially useful.” After much entreaty Taulere consented to preach the sermon requested of him.

He preached it a few days after ; the audience were charmed ; and the preacher and his eloquence were the discourse of the day.

On the following morning, the layman waited on Taulere ; repeated to him, word for word, the whole of his sermon, and then humbly requested his leave to comment particularly upon it. To this, Taulere consented ; and the layman then pointed out to him, those passages in it, where purity of heart, detachment from creatures, and real humility, were most inculcated. Then opening to Taulere, the inmost recesses of his heart, he made him sensible how much he fell short of the doctrine, which he had inculcated ; and concluded by telling him, that he was little better than a Pharisee.

Up to that word, Taulere heard the layman with patience, but it then failed him, and he began to justify himself with some warmth. But the layman would not allow him to proceed : “ I call him a Pharisee,” he said, “ who being full of himself, or too sensible of the “ esteem of men, seeks in his actions, however other- “ wise good and holy, his own glory, and not the glory “ of God. Consider, if you are not of this number ! “ With what dispositions did you begin your studies ? “ With what self-complacence do you contemplate your “ progress in them ? What satisfaction have you in “ thinking of your dignity of Doctor ? Of the gifts “ with which Heaven has favoured you ? Instead of re- “ ferring them to the glory of God, who should have “ all your love, and all your trust, you regard yourself

“ too much :—and thus, with all your knowledge, you
“ are really ignorant ; and with all your labours, ser-
“ mons and writings, you do little good. Your doctrine
“ is heavenly ; the word of God is often on your lips ;
“ but, in consequence of your want of humility, you
“ yourself do not relish the truths which you teach, and
“ they produce little effect on your hearers. The pure
“ of heart, who seek God alone, are shocked by your
“ sermons, which contain many good things, but abound
“ too much with yourself.”—Here the holy layman
paused.

For some time Taulere was silent ; he was confounded with the clear view, which, for the first time, he had of his vanity and defects :—but, it was the moment of grace. “ I acknowledge,” he said to his instructor, “ the truth of all you say. The Holy Spirit speaks by you to me. You read into my heart ; God alone can enable you to do it ; I was a stranger to my heart ; complete what you have so well begun : You are my guide, my teacher, my master.”

Satisfied with his good dispositions, the layman put into the hands of Taulere, a writing, containing the true principles of a spiritual life, and desired him to reflect seriously on it, and give himself up, for a few days, to retirement and devotion. Taulere obeyed ; and during his retreat the layman frequently called on him, explained to him the science of the saints, and watched his progress in it. He inculcated to him the necessity of humility, of mortification, of self-renunciation, and of living for God alone. When he found that Taulere was thoroughly initiated in these holy doctrines, the layman informed him, that the will of God called him elsewhere, and that he should be absent from him during two years. “ During that time,” said the layman,

“ you must abstain from preaching, from teaching,
“ from hearing confessions, from the direction of souls,
“ and all other public functions. You must faithfully
“ practise the ordinary duties of the community ; and,
“ when you are not employed in them, you must remain
“ in your cell, abstain from the pursuit of profane
“ science, and, in solitude and silence, incessantly be-
“ wail your sins at the foot of the cross. You will
“ suffer much, both in mind and body ; but you will
“ not be wholly without divine consolation. Above all
“ things, trust in God. You will learn at length to
“ renounce yourself, to take up his cross, and follow
“ him.”

Taulere obeyed these lessons most punctually. The brilliant, the eloquent, (we had almost said) the edifying Taulere, was no longer seen : in his stead came a monk, —regular at the prayers and other duties of the community, employed in its meanest offices, and, at all other times, shut up in his cell. The change struck every one ; it became the general talk of Cologne ; and it was finally concluded, that, from some cause or other, probably from too great application to study, Taulere had deranged his intellects :—his great learning, it was said, had brought him to an early childhood. Thus he became a subject of general contempt ; and, all this time, he was afflicted with frequent and painful illness, and interior trials of the severest kind.

He persevered, however, under the trial. Atlast, on the 25th of January, the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in the year 1348, which was exactly two years after the layman had quitted him, he suddenly felt sentiments of compunction and devotion, of hatred of sin, and of the love of God, which, till then, he had never known. A ray of light seemed to burst on him ;

it filled him with unspeakable delight ; the sacred science of the cross was infused into him, and all the knowledge, which had once been a subject to him of so much pride, appeared to him contemptible.

The Layman then called on him : he congratulated Taulere on his reformation, and assured him it was nearly complete ; but he enjoined him to watch carefully over himself. “ It is the will of God,” he told him, “ that you should again preach to the faithful. “ You will again be a subject of admiration ; again be “ courted and followed : but take heed,—the world’s “ contempt of you was serviceable to you ; be in guard “ against a return of its favour.”

Three days after, Taulere again ascended the pulpit : it was known that he was to preach, and he had a splendid and crowded audience. Just as he was entering on his discourse, a sentiment of sorrow for his sins rushed on him, and chained all his faculties. He wept bitterly, but could not articulate a syllable. The audience wondered, and, after some time, went away, some of them shocked, and others laughing at the strangeness of the scene. Taulere received this new humiliation with joy, and, in silence, offered his thanks for it to God ; and, blessing him for all his mercies, resigned himself, in heavenly peace, to his holy will.

With these sentiments he returned to his cell. He found the Layman there : “ This last humiliation,” he said to Taulere, “ was wanting to complete the work of “ God, and to fit you for his holy designs. You have “ cheerfully sacrificed your reputation to him ; he has “ accepted the sacrifice. Remain in solitude, and dedicate yourself to prayer for five days. At the end of “ them, his Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and “ you will then be properly qualified for preaching his

“ sacred word, and he will bless your endeavours.” The Layman then took his leave of him.

At the end of the five days, Taulere resumed the functions of his ministry, and from that time practised all he taught. Assiduous in the discharge of his duties, he spared no fatigue in them ; and all the time, which he did not employ on them, he gave to prayer, or to the composition of works for the instruction of the faithful. His sermons and writings were equally admired ; but they no longer produced barren admiration. Numbers were reclaimed by him from sin ; and numbers advanced under his guidance to evangelical perfection. He was equally sought by the learned and the ignorant ; the greatest persons of the times consulted him ; he was the advocate of the poor, the friend of the comfortless ; and, long after he ceased to live, his memory was in general benediction.

A short time before he died, he wished to see, once more, the Layman, to whom he owed his conversion. When he saw him, he put into his hands an account, which he had written of the particulars of it, and expressed to the Layman his wish, that he would make it public, “ for the instruction of those, who, (as had once been his case,) might flatter themselves, from the “ eclat of their spiritual exertions, with an opinion of “ their own perfection, while, in fact, they were barren “ of good, in the eye of the Almighty.” The Layman published it immediately after the decease of Taulere ; and we have extracted from the account given of it, by Tournon, what is contained in the preceding pages.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
JAMES BENIGNE BOSSUET,
BISHOP OF MEAUX.

Quare quis tandem me reprehendat, si quantum cæteris, ad festos dies ludorum celebrandos, quantum ad alias voluptates, et ad ipsam requiem, animi et corpores conceditur temporis; quantum alii tempestivis conviviis, quantum aleæ, quantum pilæ, tantum mihi egomet, ad hæc studia recolenda, sumpsero.

CIC. PRO ARCHIA.

Le changement d'étude est toujours un délassément pour moi.

D'AGUESSEAU.

LIFE OF BOSSUET.

CHAP. I.

The Family of Bossuet.

JAMES BENIGNE BOSSUET, the glory of the church of France, descended from an ancient and noble family in Burgundy. Several members of it had filled, with credit, offices of distinction in the parliament of Dijon. On the first establishment of the parliament of Metz, the dignity of its first president was conferred on the uncle of Bossuet; and the father of Bossuet was appointed one of its counsellors. He had two sons; Anthony, the eldest of them, became Master of Requests, and afterwards Intendant of Soissons; the second of them, is the subject of these pages; he was born on 27th of September 1627.

CHAP. II.

The early Studies of Bossuet.

AN ardour for study was discovered in Bossuet, in his very earliest years. He was first placed under the care of his uncle ; who, being himself a man of learning, quickly perceived the great natural talents of his nephew, and took pleasure in cultivating them. While he was a mere boy, Bossuet accidentally opened, in his uncle's library, the Old Testament ; he devoured it with avidity, and, in his old age, frequently mentioned the pleasure, which he had received from its perusal. He used to say, that no work had given him such exquisite delight, as he had felt on his first perusal of the Bible. This was equally a proof of his good sense, and true piety. The exquisite descriptions of domestic life and manners, with which the Old Testament abounds, the interesting narratives which it contains, of the public events in the history of the chosen seed, the countless beauties and frequent sublimity of its poetical and prophetic parts ; and, above all, the affecting simplicity which is spread over the whole of the sacred volume, make it, even as mere literary composition, the delight of every man of real taste. The beauty and sublimity of the New Testament are still more striking.—It was

natural therefore that the divine pages should captivate such a mind as Bossuet's, even in his very earliest years. It is to his praise, that this attachment to them increased with his years. In time, they became so familiar to him, that the verse, the line, the word, which he wished to remember, was ever present to his memory ; and it was generally supposed by his friends, that he knew the whole contents of the sacred volumes by heart.

He was placed, by his uncle, at the college of the Jesuits at Dijon. His laborious application to his tasks, was the wonder of his school-fellows, and procured from them, in allusion to the surname of his family, the nick-name of Bos Suetus Aratro. The Jesuits wished to retain him among them ; but, as soon as he had reached the class of rhetoric, his uncle, who had other views for him, removed him to Paris, and entered him in the college of Navarre. Nicholas Cornet was principal of that college. He showed a marked affection for Bossuet, and directed his studies. He was a person of great learning ; and one of the earliest and most formidable antagonists of the Jansenists. Bossuet always spoke of him in terms of the highest esteem, and, at his decease, pronounced his funeral oration. He mentions in it a circumstance greatly to the praise of M. Cornet. One of his friends having a law-suit, M. Cornet exerted his interest in favour of him, with the judge who was to try the cause ; and it was decided in his favour. Some time afterwards, M. Cornet

had doubts of the justice of the decision ; and, being apprehensive that it had been influenced by his conversations with the judge, he paid to the adversary the whole amount of the sum in dispute.

The manner in which Bossuet defended his Philosophical Thesis, first brought him into notice. Through life, he was a warm advocate of the Cartesian Philosophy ; “ Friendly, but warm disputes,” says Huet, the celebrated bishop of Avranches, “ frequently took place between us, on the subject of Cartesianism.” Bossuet’s *Defension of Universal Theology* was honoured by the presence of the great Condé ; who was, at that time, a student at the college of the Jesuits at Paris. It is related of the prince, as an early instance of his glorious impetuosity, that, during Bossuet’s *Defension*, he was restrained, with difficulty, from rising in the assembly, and disputing in form with him. A compliment, which Bossuet took an opportunity of paying the prince, was universally admired. An intimate friendship soon took place between them, and only ended with the prince’s life. In 1652, Bossuet received the order of priesthood.

He had previously taken the degree of doctor. In the discourse, which, according to custom, he pronounced on that occasion, he solemnly devoted himself to the cause of religion.—“ Under thy auspices,” he exclaimed, “ O sacred Truth ! I will joyfully approach those altars, which are to witness the oath which I am about to take ; an

“ oath, which our ancestors have often heard.—
“ That most pleasing and most sacred oath, by
“ which I am to bind myself, even to death, to
“ the holy cause of Truth. O words, rather of a
“ martyr, than a doctor of truth ! Yet, surely not
“ less becoming the latter than the former ! For
“ both are equally to testify to truth. Wherefore,
“ O divine Truth ! O Truth conceived in the eternal
“ Father ! Who, descending from him to mortals,
“ didst deliver thyself to us in the holy Scriptures !
“ To Thee, we bend ourselves, wholly and unre-
“ servedly : To Thee, we dedicate our very exist-
“ ence ! Never shall we forget, that those, who
“ should be prodigal of life, should never spare
“ exertion in thy cause.”

CHAP. III.

The first Appearance of Bossuet in Public Life.

THE first preferment of Bossuet was a Canonicate in the cathedral church of Metz ; and he was successively raised to the rank of archdeacon, and dean in that church. The affairs of the cathedral, making it necessary that he should go to Paris, he frequently preached in the capital. His sermons were universally applauded, and he was appointed to preach the sermons of the Lent of 1663, before Lewis the fourteenth, in the chapel of the Louvre. His

majesty was so pleased with his sermons, that he ordered M. Rose, his private secretary, “to write
“ in his name, to the father of Bossuet, and con-
“ gratulate him on the great talents displayed by
“ his son ; and to mention the pleasure, which his
“ majesty received from his sermons.” In 1669, the king nominated Bossuet to the bishopric of Condom.

Having led Bossuet to this important epoch of his life, we shall attempt to some view of his character,—as a man of letters,—a controvertist, a preacher, and a prelate.

CHAP. IV.

Bossuet's Classical Studies.

ALL the bibliographers of Bossuet mention, that, in the early part of his studies, he acquired a perfect knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages ; that he had repeatedly perused the works of the principal poets, historians, and orators of antiquity, and that Homer and Demosthenes, among the Greeks, and Virgil among the Latins, were his favourite authors. His acquaintance with them, gave him that chaste and nervous style, which is so seldom attained by persons, who have not formed themselves on those models. In the works of these writers, brilliant, pathetic, and even sublime

passages are often found ; but that, which constitutes the perfection of style, and alone enables it to engage attention, when it is not excited by a sentiment, an image, or a turn of phrase particularly striking, the indescribable charm of the proper word in the proper place, is learned nowhere, but in the Greek and Roman school. With how much difficulty it is attained, Bossuet himself is a striking example. The Benedictine editors of his works, inform us, that his manuscripts are so much disfigured by obliterations, insertions and corrections of every sort, as to be almost illegible. This is the case of almost all writers, whose works reach a future age. It was particularly the case of a celebrated orator and author of our times. Nothing seems more flowing or more easy than the style of the late Mr. Edmund Burke ; it has all the appearance of an effusion of unpremeditated eloquence. But we are informed, that, almost every period in his writings, was written over three times, at least, before it satisfied its author ; and that, even in that state, the work was printed, with a large margin, for the purpose of a still further revision ; and was, even then, once more corrected before it was submitted to the public eye.—Such is the toilsome drudgery, to which every writer must submit, who aspires to be numbered among the classical writers of his country. Yet, after all the labour we have mentioned, the writings of Bossuet, those even, which he polished with the greatest

care, are not wholly free from sins against syntax and grammar.

Through life, Bossuet was a very early riser : and if, while he was in bed, his sleep was delayed or interrupted, he availed himself of it, to write his letters, or to commit to paper, any interesting thought, which occurred to him ; he also frequently gave this time to prayer. No portion of time, he used to say, was so favourable to devotion, as the stillness of the night ; none, when the Holy Spirit was more propitious to those, who invoke him.

He had no regular hours for his meals ; visits of ceremony, which the most imperious *etiquête* did not prescribe, he neither received, nor paid : but it appears that he was easy of access, and affable in conversation.—He was so covetous of his time, as to deny himself the blameless recreation of a walk in his garden. Once, however, he fell into conversation with his gardener ; and remarked that his garden had few of his visits.—“ That is very true,” said the gardener ; “ but, if the trees bore Chrysosoms or Austins or Ambroses, you would be devouring their fruit from morning to night.”

After he had completed his studies, classical literature seems to have had little of Bossuet’s attention. He not only blamed the introduction of pagan mythology into works of religion, but thought, that it should be sparingly and guardedly used, even in mere works of taste.

On the publication of M. de la Quintinaye’s

work on gardening, the celebrated Santeuil addressed to him some elegant Latin verses, in which he introduced the goddess Pomona, applauding the work, and exulting in its success. Santeuil was engaged, at that time, in composing hymns for the new Breviary of Cluni; but it too often happened, that some profane subject attracted his attention, and made him truant to his sacred muse. On these wanderings, his friends often expostulated with him; he always professed to repent, and promised amendment, but too soon repeated the offence. The verses to M. de la Quintinaye were a new crime: Bossuet affected to be violently angry at them; and both Fenelon and Fleury gave the poet a terrible account of the prelate's anger. To sooth it, Santeuil addressed to Bossuet a poem of exquisite art and beauty. He begins by professing his zealous and unvaried attachment to religion; mentions his sacred labours; observes that some relaxation from them was necessary; and where, he asks, can a poet seek relaxation, better, than in the sportive strains of poetic personification?—"And, after all, was there any thing really alarming in mentioning Pomona? Was Bossuet, the glory of the Gallican hierarchy, the oracle of the whole church, to whom even royalty listened with respect, was he to be scared at the name of Pomona? But the poet would never be guilty of the like offence: he would dedicate himself entirely to holy themes.—As a penance for his offence, he

would sing the praises of the eternal Father, his coeternal Son, and the Spirit which proceeds from both, in strains which Bossuet himself would vouchsafe to hear.—Would not this atone for Pomona?—If it did not, he would dress himself in sackcloth, sprinkle his head with ashes, tie a rope round his neck, and hold, like a criminal, a burning taper in his hand: At the head of an immense multitude, who were to serve for witnesses of his humiliation, he would present himself before the prelate, at the threshold of the altar, and, on his knees, confess his fault, and implore its forgiveness.” To these verses, Santeuil prefixed an etching, in which he himself appeared the dismal figure described in his verses. With one hand, he seemed to strike his breast; and, with the other to hold a burning taper, with which he burnt his guilty verses. Bossuet was drawn in his episcopal robes, with his mitre and crosier, and seemed to stretch out his hand to the humble and contrite bard. It is needless to say, that Bossuet’s wrath was appeased, and that he took the bard into favour. “Behold!” said Bossuet in a letter which he writ to him, on receiving the verses,—“Behold, what is gained by
“ a little humility.—You were guilty of a little
“ fault; humbled yourself a little for it;—and in
“ the instant, you compose the finest verses which
“ you have yet produced.”

CHAP. V.

*Bossuet's Condemnation of Stage
Entertainments.*

IF Bossuet censured, with so much severity, a mere casual allusion to pagan mythology, no indulgence could be expected from him to stage entertainments. A letter, which father Caffaro, a Theatine monk, published in their defence, produced from him a very eloquent reply. As the subject is interesting, and Bossuet's reply to father Caffaro, is a fair specimen of his eloquence in controversy, an account of it, in this place, may be acceptable to the reader.

The scenic exhibitions of Rome did not survive her: the theatres themselves and all their pride, pomp and circumstance, perished in the general wreck, to which, the irruptions of the barbarians reduced the arts and sciences of the Roman world.

The first glimmering of the restoration of the drama is discernible in some exhibitions, which generally made a part of the national feasts of the Carlovingian monarchs. These feasts were opened by a grand high-mass; the deliberation followed, and was succeeded by a sumptuous dinner. After dinner, shows of foreign beasts, and of animals, trained to particular tricks and exercises, were

exhibited ; and ballad singers, harpers and jugglers, the rude forefathers of the modern drama, also attended, and contributed their share to the festivities of the day.

Chivalry introduced into them, magnificence, order and refinement. It is probable, that the tilts and tournaments of the feudal ages excelled, whatever ancient or modern times have produced, in the form of public spectacle ; and to these, we owe the revival of the scenic art. The provençal bards often appeared at them, in companies, and recited tragic or comic poems. By degrees, they formed them into dialogues, and, to make their dialogues more interesting, put on a dress and gait suitable to those of the persons, whose characters they assumed. From this, the passage to an exhibition, possessing all the substantial requisites of a scenic entertainment, was easy ; and, as nothing could be more congenial than these exhibitions, to the taste and manners of a chivalrous age, they soon attained a high degree of order. . But there was more pageantry in them, than of dialogue, and every thing about them had a military air. Devotion, however, had some share in them ; so that there were both secular and religious dramas. They were distinguished into *Mysteries*, in which, remarkable events in the Scriptures, or in the lives of the saints, were represented ; *Allegories*, in which faith, hope, charity, sin and death, and other mystic beings, were introduced to speak and act in

personification ; and *Moralities*, in which, sometimes real, and sometimes fictitious characters were brought into scenic action, and a general moral was drawn from the exhibition. Of these entertainments, the mysteries were most popular : they were sometimes performed in churches. “ We cannot sufficiently wonder,” says the president Hénault (*Remarques particulieres sur l’histoire de France, troisieme race*), “ that these mysteries were represented under the sanction of the most respectable magistrates.—Jesus Christ, the Holy Virgin, whatever is most sacred in religion, was brought on the stage in a guise of familiarity, to which we cannot reconcile ourselves. But the difference of the times solves the enigma ; and, while it shows the ignorance and simplicity, proves the good-humoured innocence of the age, which was fond of such exhibitions. We must not suppose that they were profanations of religion ; they were spectacles, which, by placing religious subjects before their eyes, in a manner highly calculated to impress them on their conceptions and feelings, conveyed instruction to a gross and ignorant people.—And, after all, are we not fallen on times, which make us regret this age of simplicity, in which there was so little of false reasoning, and so much of honest belief !”

A confraternity, under the appellation of *the Confraternity of the Holy Passion*, obtained from the parliament of Paris, a patent, which conferred

on the members of it, the exclusive right of representing dramatic exhibitions in the city of Paris ; but the disorders, to which they gave rise, induced the parliament, in 1541 and 1548, to forbid their representing sacred subjects.—At a much earlier period, the exhibition of them in churches had been absolutely prohibited by the clergy.—When these sacred exhibitions were interdicted to the confraternity of the Holy Passion, they assigned their privilege to a troop of comic actors, called the ‘ *Enfans sans Souçi*.’ There were other companies, but the *Enfans sans Souçi* were always the favourite performers. Their privilege was revoked in 1584. They were succeeded by a company called ‘ *the Gelosi* ;’ and those, by the company called ‘ *l’Elite Royal*,’ which, in 1641, was indirectly sanctioned by an edict of Lewis the 13th,—the Magna Charta of the French theatre. This company afterwards divaricated into two branches ; one established itself at the *Hotel de Bourgogne*, and the other at the *Hotel d’Argent aux Marais*. The abolition of tilts and tournaments, the revival of the arts and sciences, the merit of some dramatic writers, the great extension of the city of Paris, the increase of its wealth and of the number of its idle inhabitants, and the consequential diffusion of gallantry ; produced, in the capital, an universal passion for stage entertainment. It rapidly pervaded every part of the kingdom, so that, towards the end of the reign of Lewis the 14th, there scarcely was,

in his dominions, a town of any consequence, which had not its theatre.—The introduction of the *Italian opera* into France, in 1633, carried dramatic song and dance to their utmost pitch of refinement.

Such was the rise and progress of the French stage. It was always viewed by *the State*, with a considerable degree of jealousy. A capitulary of Charlemagne, of the year 809, ranks theatrical performers among discreditable persons. In 1181, Philip Augustus banished actors from his court; St. Lewis would never admit them to it; Lewis the 13th subjected the theatre to severe regulations:—those were adopted, and others provided by a legislative enactment, which, in 1680, Lewis the 14th addressed, in the form of a letter, to the lieutenant-general de police. It seems to carry precaution, for the prevention of improper representations on the stage, and repressing immorality among the actors, as far as practical precaution, in these respects, can be carried.

It will be readily conceived, that the *Church of France* was more severe on scenic exhibitions, than the state. A multitude of French provincial councils, are mentioned by French writers on this subject, which speak harshly of them: their censures of ecclesiastics, who frequent the theatre, are pointedly severe. The passages against the stage, which are cited from the rituals of particular churches of France, are numerous. Among the

writers against the stage, its adversaries are proud to mention, one of the royal blood of France, Francis-Lewis, Prince of Conti.—The uniform practice of the curates of the Gallican church, was, to refuse the sacraments to theatrical performers, even in their last moments, unless they made a public promise that they would not appear again on the theatre ; and, if they did not make this declaration, christian burial was denied to their remains.

Still, the theatre was always frequented, and, among those who frequented it, persons of the highest character, for probity, honour, and an exemplary discharge of duty, were always found. This was admitted by Bossuet. “ Great examples,” he told Lewis the 14th, “ may be cited in “ defence of the theatre ; but the reasons against “ it are still stronger than these examples.” It is related that a lady mentioned, in confession to father Bourdalou, that she had been to a play, and asked him, if she had sinned ; “ That,” said the good father, “ I am to hear from you.”

In this conflict of example and argument, on the lawfulness of stage entertainments, father Caffaro undertook their defence, and proved himself an able advocate of their cause. The successive examples of Corneille, Quinault and Racine, who had quitted the theatre to lead a life of religious retirement, and who had publicly expressed repentance of their dramatic performances, (and whose example was followed, in 1760, by Gresset, the

author of the immortal Vert-Vert),—awakened similar sentiments of compunction in Boursault, a dramatic writer of some eminence in his day, and he confided his scruples to father Caffaro. The father's reply to Boursault first appeared with the title, "*Lettre d'un Theologien, illustre par sa qualité et par son merite, consulté pour sçavoir si la comedie peut etre permise, ou doit etre absolument defendue;*" but, after the first edition of it, the words "*Theologien illustre par sa qualité,*" were dropt in the title, and the work was announced as the letter "*d'un homme d'erudition et de merite.*" It is generally prefixed to the '*Theatre de Boursault:*' in the edition of that work in 1725, it is now before the writer's eye.

Father Caffaro begins his letter with an acknowledgment, which may be thought to make the defence of the stage an arduous undertaking. "The more I examine the holy fathers,"—these are his own expressions,—"the more I read the works of theologians, the more I consult the casuists, the less I feel myself able to form any conclusion. The school divines are somewhat less hostile to the theatre; but I hardly find a passage in them, which sounds in its favour, when I feel myself overwhelmed by a torrent of passages from councils and fathers of every age, who have thundered against the theatre, and employed all the fervour of their zeal and powers of their eloquence, to make it an object of horror

“to christians.” He eludes the sentence, which these high authorities seem to pronounce against the stage, by bringing before the reader, the abominations, with which the theatrical representations of Rome abounded, and from which the theatre of his and our times are certainly free.—“But, you must read the fathers very carelessly,” Bossuet indignantly replies, “if you find that, in the theatrical exhibitions of their times, the fathers condemned nothing more than their idolatrous representations, or their scandalous and open impurities.—They equally condemn the idleness, the enormous dissipation of spirit, the violent emotions so little becoming a christian, whose heart should be the sanctuary of the peace of God, the desire of seeing and being seen, the criminal occurrence of looks, the being engrossed with vanity, those bursts of laughter, which banish from the heart, all recollection of God, of his holy presence, of his awful judgments. In the midst of all this pomp and agitation, who, they ask, can raise his heart to God? Who would be bold enough to address himself to the Deity, and say to him, ‘O my God, I am here, because it is thy holy will?’ In the midst of the silly joy, and silly tenderness of the stage, who can preserve a spirit of prayer? St. John (Ep. I. ch. ii. 15, 16), cries out to all the faithful, ‘Love not the world, nor that which is in the world: for every thing in it is concupiscence of the flesh,

“concupiscence of the eyes, or the pride of life.”
 “In these words, the world, and the theatre, which
 “represents the world, are equally reprobated. In
 “the theatre, as in the world, all is sensuality,
 “ostentation and pride; in the theatre, as in the
 “world, nothing but a love of these wretched
 “things, is inculcated.—All this and much more
 “is said by the holy fathers, and all of it is appli-
 “cable to the theatres of the present day.”

Father Caffaro cites, in favour of the theatre, several passages in the works of St. Thomas of Aquin, St. Antoninus, Bishop of Florence, St. Charles Borromeo, and St. Francis of Sales. In answer to the arguments, drawn by him from these passages, Bossuet observes, that, in all of them, comedies are mentioned abstractedly, that is, not as they actually exist, but as, by possibility, they might be constructed. In respect to the passages cited from St. Thomas, Bossuet particularly observes, that St. Thomas cannot be understood, to speak, in them, of comedies, in the actual acceptation of that word; as comedies, in that acceptation of the word, did not exist in St. Thomas's day. “At all events,” Bossuet says to father Caffaro, “you confess that the writers, whom you cite, “allow no scenic representation to be innocent, “which contains any thing contrary to good mo-
 “rals: Now, whether the scenic representations
 “of the present times are contrary to good morals,

“ is the point in discussion between us ; your
“ citations, therefore, prove nothing.”

In reply to an argument, which father Caffaro urges in favour of theatrical representations, from their being tolerated by the civil government of every country, Bossuet observes, that, if the state permits them, it is not because the state approves of them, but because the state is apprehensive that the absolute interdiction of them, might, in great cities, always abounding in vice and luxury, occasion still greater disorders.

After thus endeavouring to remove, what he insinuates to be an unwarrantable prejudice against the theatrical representations of modern times, in consequence of the harsh terms, in which the ancient fathers condemned the stage,—Father Caffaro proceeds to state, that the theatre of his day contained nothing contrary to decency or morality. “ Can you,” exclaims Bossuet,—“ Can you then really assert, in the face of heaven, that dramatic compositions, in which the virtue and piety of a christian are generally held out to ridicule ; in which, what the Gospel pronounces to be criminal, is generally defended and made agreeable ; in which virgin purity is so often blurred by impudent acts and words ;—Can you really assert that such compositions are free from crime ?—Does it become the habit or name of a priest, to defend the silly gallantry, the maxims of love,

“ the invitations to enjoy the gay hours of youth,
“ which for ever resound in the operas of Quinault,
“ —of Quinault, whom I myself have seen a hundred times bewailing these follies?—Is it for
“ you, to recal him to compositions, which, since
“ he has begun to think seriously of his salvation,
“ he so bitterly laments?

“ You say, that stage entertainments, only excite
“ those passions, indirectly, distantly and accidentally. But, what is the direct object of those who
“ compose, of those who act, and of those who attend these representations? The wish of the
“ author and the actor is, that the spectator should
“ be enamoured of the heroes and divinities of the
“ theatre; that he should be taught the duty of
“ sacrificing all but glory, and even glory itself, to
“ love. Is it their wish that this should be taught,
“ indirectly, distantly and accidentally?

“ You are sensible that immodest paintings are
“ universally condemned. But, how much more
“ horrid is the indecency of theatrical representations! There, it is not an inanimate marble, it is
“ not a dry tint; all is action itself. The persons
“ are alive; the eyes, the tongue, the gestures are
“ real,—and while they seduce every imagination,
“ and inflame every heart; talk not to me of passions which they excite, indirectly, distantly and
“ accidentally!—What are those speeches, which
“ excite youth to love, (as if youth of itself were
“ not sufficiently inconsiderate), which make them

“envy the very birds, whom nothing disturbs in
“their loves, and which prompt them to rebel
“against the laws of reason and modesty?—Do
“these, and a hundred lessons of the kind, only
“excite passion, indirectly, distantly and acci-
“dentally? If they do not excite it instantly and
“outrageously, the author, the performer and the
“spectator, are equally disappointed.

“After this,—do you dare say, either that the
“end and aim of the theatre is not to excite di-
“rectly, and, by its own very powers, the fire of
“concupiscence? Or do you dare say, that con-
“cupiscence is not evil? Can you say, that the
“virgin modesty of a well educated daughter, is
“only distantly and accidentally offended, by the
“dramatic heroines, who talk over their combats,
“their resistances, and their defeats. The modest,
“amiable, virtuous heroine of the Theatre, con-
“fesses her failings, the seductions of her heart ;
“and the whole theatre applauds her. What a
“lesson does she give?—how well does she enforce
“it?”

Father Caffaro then remarks, that, he did not discover, from what he heard in confession, the wonderful malignity of the theatre, or the crimes, of which it is said to be the source: “Probably,” says Bossuet, “when you say this, you are not
“thinking of what actresses, and singers, have to
“confess, or of the scandals of their loves. Is it
“nothing to sacrifice the sex to public sensuality,

“ in a manner, still more fatally dangerous, than is
“ done in places which cannot be named? What
“ christian mother, or, if she were a pagan, what
“ decent mother, would not behold her child in the
“ grave, sooner than behold her on the stage?—
“ Was it for this disgrace, she would say, that I
“ reared her, with so much tenderness and care?
“ Did I preserve her, day and night under my
“ wings, for this public prostitution? Who does
“ not look on these christians,—(if living in a pro-
“ fession so opposite to their baptismal vows, they
“ may yet be called christians),—who, I say, does
“ not look on them as slaves exposed to sale, in a
“ public market? Their sex consecrated them to
“ modesty, to the retirement of a well regulated
“ house, and how do they appear on the theatre?
“ Do they not appear with all the parade of those
“ sirens in the temple of Vanity, so well described
“ by Isaiah, whose looks are deadly, and who re-
“ ceive back, in the applause which is given them,
“ the poison which they fling among the spectators?
“ Is it no crime, for a spectator to pay for this
“ luxury?—none, to nourish this corruption?—
“ none, to teach them or learn from them, what
“ ought never to be known?”

“ But,” says father Caffaro, “ you can’t take a
“ step, open a book, or even enter a church, with-
“ out meeting with something which excites your
“ passions;—it is therefore no objection to the
“ theatre, that you find in it objects which excite

“ them.”—“ The reasoning is excellent,” says Bossuet :—“ the world abounds with unavoidable dangers, therefore you should multiply them. “ Every creature you meet with is a snare to man, “ you may therefore invent new snares, for his “ ruin. Every object that meets your eyes, may “ excite your passions, you may therefore add to “ your dangers by seeking objects, whose elegance “ and refinement, make them more dangerous.— “ Rather say,—the dangers of the world are already “ too great, let us not add to them :—God vouch- “ safes his assistance to us, in dangers inseparable “ from our condition, but he abandons us in dangers of our own seeking ; he has assured us that “ all who love danger shall perish in it.”

Such is the general tone of Bossuet’s reply. It was communicated privately to father Caffaro. He, almost immediately, answered it, by a letter, in which he protested that the letter, which he had addressed to Boursault, in defence of the theatre, was not designed for publication ; and intimated, that it had been altered, in some respects, in the impression ; but he seems to admit that the alterations in it were not of importance. He professes to be convinced by Bossuet’s arguments, of the errors of the doctrines contained in it, and promises to retract them. This promise, he performed by a letter addressed by him, a few days after, to the archbishop of Paris. He expresses in it, the great concern, which, his having written the letter in

question, had given him ; he retracts it unequivocally, and concludes by saying, that, after a full examination of the subject, he was perfectly convinced, that the reasons, urged in defence of stage entertainments, were frivolous ; and that the reasons, given by the Church, for her condemnation of them, were solid and unanswerable.

The dispute was renewed several times, in the course of last century. In the first year of it, the actors on the French theatre presented a petition to the pope, in which, they represented to his holiness, that it was the year of the Church's centenary jubilee, and therefore a time of indulgence and benignity ; that, since the church had first passed her censure on theatrical exhibitions, they had undergone a complete alteration, and been purged from the indecency and ribaldry, which had provoked those censures ; they prayed therefore for a removal of them. But his holiness was inexorable ; and, by his direction, some works were published to justify the Church's severity.—Towards the middle of the century a contest, on the tendency of stage entertainments, took place between Rousseau and D'Alembert.—The latter, in an article in his *Miscellanies*, censured the magistrates of Geneva, for not permitting a theatre within that city. Rousseau undertook the defence of the magistracy, and replied to D'Alembert in a letter, which has been much admired, both for its eloquence and argument. The principal object of it, is to show, that the

morality of the stage is not the morality of real probity ; that comedy places virtue in a ridiculous light, and makes immorality agreeable ; and that tragedy makes crime an object of admiration, by the splendor of talents and glory, with which she radiates it. D'Alembert replied to Rousseau : his letter contains many sensible observations, but, as a literary composition, sinks before that of his antagonist. In 1761, the celebrated M^{elle} Clairon, professionally consulted with M. Huerne de la Motte, a French avocat, on the reprobation of actors by the civil law of France, and the supposed excommunication of them by the Gallican church. M. Huerne de la Motte delivered his opinion, in a long dissertation, in which he attempted to show, that the laws both of the state and the church against the theatre, were founded in prejudice ; and that the supposed excommunication of the actors was an invasion of the liberties of the Gallican church. On the motion of M. Joly de Fleury, the procureur general of the king, the parliament of Paris ordered this dissertation of M. Huerne de la Motte to be burned by the hangman ; and, on a general requisition of the French bar, M. Huerne de la Motte was expelled from it.

M. Desprez d'Boissy, in his "*Lettres sur les Spectacles*," (ed. 1774, 2 part, pa. 673) mentions, that two individuals having entered into an agreement to establish a new theatre, one of them, from motives of conscience, declined the adventure ; that

the other instituted, in one of the civil courts of Paris, a suit to compel him to perform his part of the contract; and that the court was of opinion, that the contract was morally vicious, and therefore legally void.

It only remains to observe on this head, that Bossuet moulded his letter to father Caffaro into the form of an essay, and published it with the title “*Maximes sur la Comédie.*”

CHAP. VI.

Bossuet's “Exposition of the Doctrine of the Roman-catholic Church.”

OF all Bossuet's controversial works, this is the most valuable. In disputes of every kind, the first object of those, who really seek for truth, is to ascertain the precise points in difference between them and their adversaries; then, to see that these are expressed with precision, both in words and substance: and then to confine the discussion to them, with as little divergence as possible, into extraneous matter. It is surprising how much, by attending to these rules, good sense and good humour will lessen the number of apparent articles of disagreement, and reduce their weight.

On the part of the Roman-catholics, this, by their universal consent, has been admirably performed

by Bossuet, in the work of which we are now speaking. It was composed originally for the private use of the marquis de Dangeau ; and, having been communicated by him to the maréchal de Turenne, that great man was sensible of its merit, and circulated it every where : and thus, it became generally known. In composing it, he was sensible, how important it was, not only to himself, but to the whole church, that it should be absolutely free from error. With this view, he caused a small number of copies of it to be privately printed, and circulated them among several persons of acknowledged learning and piety in the Gallican church, with a request from him, that they would favour him with their remarks, on any parts of it, that should appear to them obscure, erroneous or imperfect.—After he had received their communications, he published the work, and prefixed to it the formal approbations of the archbishops of Rheims and Tours ; of the bishops of Châlons, Uzez, Meaux, Grénoble, Tulle, Auxerre, Tarbes, Béziers, and Autun.

Soon after its publication, Bossuet received from cardinal Bona, cardinal Chigi, and Hyacinth Libelli, then master of the Sacred Palace, afterwards archbishop of Avignon, the most unequivocal and unqualified approbations of it ; and it was twice formally approved by pope Innocent the 11th, first, by a brief, dated the 22d of Nov. 1678, and afterwards, by a brief, dated the 12th of July 1679.

The clergy of France, in their assembly of 1682, signified their approbation of it, and declared it to contain the doctrines of the roman-catholic church. It is translated into the language of every country, where the roman-catholic religion is either dominant or tolerated.

Roman-catholics have but one opinion of it :— in public and in private, by the learned and unlearned, it is equally acknowledged to be a full and faultless exposition of the doctrine of their church.

A translation of it was published, in English, by the abbé Montagu, in 1672 ; in Irish, by father Porter at the press of the Propaganda, in 1673 ; in German, by the prince bishop of Paderborn, in the same year ; in Dutch, by the bishop of Castorie, in 1678 ; in Italian, by the abbé Nazari, under the inspection of the cardinal d'Etrées, who, himself, corrected the proofs of the impression. This translation was formally approved of by Ricci, the secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, and by father Laurence Brancati, librarian of the Vatican ; and, with their permission, was dedicated to the Congregation of Propaganda. It was translated into Latin, under the immediate inspection of Bossuet, by the abbé de Fleury, the author of the invaluable History of the Church. The abbé Lenglet du Fresnoy mentions (*Memoires d'Artigny, tom 1. p. 336, note 6.*), that the celebrated M. Basnage assured him, that, in the opinion of Protestants, it had injured their cause more than

all other roman-catholic works of controversy, collectively taken.—It is much to be lamented that the English translation of it is very ill executed.

Several answers to it by protestants were published : all of them agree in accusing Bossuet of disguising the tenets of the roman-catholic church, in order to make them more palatable to protestants. But surely, this charge cannot be supported. When a body of men, so numerous and so respectable as the roman-catholics, (what candid protestant does not allow them to be both numerous and respectable?), declare, without a single dissenting voice, that a particular work expresses their tenets, fully and unequivocally, it is indecent and unfair in the extreme, to charge it with disguising them. Should not those, who make the charge, rather acknowledge, that they had misconceived them?

It is generally understood, that the roman-catholic church owes, to this invaluable exposition of her faith, one of her most distinguished proselytes. The circumstance is thus related by the cardinal Maury in his “ *Essai sur l'Eloquence de la Chaire*,” (ed. 1810. 1 vol. p. 252).

Marshal Turenne was educated in the protestant religion, and long continued attached to the principles of Calvin. While he adhered to them, he rendered his party every service, which might be expected from his sincerity, his credit, and his glory. So highly was his probity respected by Lewis the fourteenth, that the monarch never

expected from the ambition or politics of Turenne, that change of his religious principles, which he so earnestly desired, but which, he knew, could only be expected from Turenne's real conviction. The king repeated often, but never in the presence of Turenne, that, in the war of the Fronde, when it was of so much importance to oppose Turenne to the great Condé, the queen regent had promised him the dignity of high constable of France, the highest which a subject could fill, in the old government; and the monarch used frequently to declare, that he was ever ready, if, by a change of religion, Turenne would remove the only obstacle in its way, to perform the engagements of his mother.—One day, a sword of the most costly and exquisite workmanship, was presented to Lewis the fourteenth to be worn by him, for the first time. The king extolled the workmanship of it; and Turenne, who was present, took it out of the hands of the monarch, considered it with attention, and expressed his opinion of the beauty of its workmanship, in terms of admiration, which were not common to him.—“It gives me great pleasure,” Lewis said to him with a very serious look, “that you are
“satisfied with the workmanship of this sword. I
“gave particular directions that it should be
“finished in the highest degree of perfection—
“Now hear my motive for it. It is the sword
“which I design for the high constable of France;
“I shall only wear it, while that office continues

“ vacant.—It will suit you wonderfully ; and it is
“ yours whenever you please to receive it. You
“ know, there is an obstacle to it ; (but it is an
“ obstacle, which you yourself can remove, when
“ you will) ; and to my most sincere regret, this
“ circumstance alone prevents me from delivering
“ it, at this very moment, into your hands.”
Turenne immediately returned the sword to his
majesty, saying, “ that he felt himself more ho-
“ noured, than he could express, by so flattering
“ an expression of his majesty’s kindness towards
“ him, and that, in his heart, he preferred it to all
“ dignities.” “ But,” added Turenne, “ the at-
“ tachment which your majesty shews to your
“ religion, proves to me, how I should preserve
“ my attachment to mine.”

Some years after this circumstance took place, Bossuet’s “ Exposition of the Roman-catholic Doctrine,” appeared. In its manuscript state, it was put, by the marquis de Dangeau, into the hands of Turenne. He read it over and over again ; and, was surprised to find the statement, which it gives of the roman-catholic faith, so different from the hideous representation given of it, by the Huguenot ministers. At first, in unison with their language respecting it, he considered it as a softened and unfair account of the doctrines, which it was intended to exhibit.—But, when it afterwards appeared in print, authenticated by the approbations of universities, doctors, bishops,

cardinals, and the pope himself, he was satisfied that it contained the doctrine of the Council of Trent, the real doctrine of the roman-catholic church. From that moment, he determined to embrace the roman-catholic religion ; and Bossuet was the first person, to whom he communicated the important secret. He desired him to make the circumstance known to his majesty ; and, at the same time, opened to him his whole mind. “ His majesty,” he said to Bossuet, “ has, more than once, intimated to me, “ his intention of conferring on me the dignity of “ high constable of France, when I should abjure “ the huguenot religion. Say, from me, to him, “ that I abjure the huguenot and embrace the “ roman-catholic religion from conviction. But I “ rely on his majesty’s kindness to me, that he “ will never mention to me the dignity of high “ constable.”

CHAP. VII.

Conference of Bossuet with M. Claude.

THE account, which Bossuet has given of this conference is extremely interesting. It turned on some of the most important of the articles in dispute between roman-catholics and protestants,—the authority, by which Jesus Christ directed christians to be governed, in the disputes, which he foresaw, would arise on his doctrine. All

roman-catholics, and all the protestants of the old school assert, that these disputes should be decided by the church. But, when churches themselves are divided, the question must be, which of them is to be obeyed. The roman-catholic says, it is that church, which existed before all other churches, and from which all churches, not in union with her, have separated. This description, they assert, applies to the roman-catholic church, and to no other. She therefore, in their opinion, is the mistress and judge of controversies. Her authority, the separatists from her, deny ; and the dispute on this point is the most important of all their differences, as the decision of it involves the decision of every other article in dispute between them.

M. Claude, the antagonist of Bossuet in this conference, enjoyed the highest reputation in his party. Bossuet speaks of his learning, polite manners and mildness, in high terms of praise. He mentions, that, throughout the conference, M. Claude listened with patience, expressed himself with clearness and force, pressed his own objections with precision ; and, never eluded an objection made to him, which admitted of an answer.

The conference was held, at the request of mademoiselle de Duras, a niece of the great Turenne. Several Huguenots of distinction assisted at it ; the countess de Lorges, a sister of mademoiselle de Duras, was the only roman-catholic present.

On the day preceding the conference, Bossuet,

by the desire of mademoiselle de Duras, waited on her, and explained to her, what he understood by the words, "Catholic Church," which he foresaw, would frequently occur in the conference. He explained to her, that, in his controversy with M. Claude, he should not appropriate these words to the roman-catholic church, but use them to denote generally, what both M. Claude and he admitted,—an external and visible society, which professed to believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and to govern itself by his word. That, to found this society, the Son of God issued from his eternal Father; that, while he was on earth, he gathered round him certain men, who acknowledged him for their master; that, in subsequent times, the faithful aggregated themselves to that society, and formed, what is called in the Apostles' Creed, the Catholic or Universal Church:—That, sometimes surrounded by infidels, sometimes torn into pieces by heretics, there had not, from the first moment of her divine origination, been one instant of time, in which she had not possessed the faith, the doctrine, and the sacraments of Christ; or in which, she had not been protected by him, or had not been visible, as the meridian sun, to all on earth. Had there been but a single instant, in which she ceased to profess the faith or possess the sacraments of Christ, it would necessarily follow that, the promises of Christ, to teach her all truth, to be *with her* to the end of the world, and to

prevent the powers of hell from prevailing against her, would have failed. That there is such a church, M. Claude admits. But it cannot, says Bossuet, be the church of M. Claude.—“ The Reformed
“ church, to justify her separation from the Roman-
“ catholic church, must either charge the Son of
“ God with a breach of his promise ; or shew the
“ other great and visible church, in which the true
“ faith has been uninterruptedly preserved.—To
“ assert the former, would be blasphemy ; to assert
“ the latter, would be to deny historical evidence.
“ When the church of the reformers first separated
“ from the one, the holy, the roman-catholic
“ church, their church, by their own confession,
“ did not enter into communion with a single
“ christian church in the whole world.”

On the day after this conversation took place, mademoiselle de Duras called on Bossuet, in company with M. de Coton, a Huguenot minister of distinction, personally known to Bossuet, and esteemed by him. By her desire, Bossuet repeated to him, what he had mentioned to her on the preceding day. M. Coton objected to Bossuet, the promises of God to the Jews, and the frequent revolts of the general body both of the people of Israel, and the people of Judah, from the true worship : and concluded from it, that there might be a temporary interruption of the church of God, without a breach of the divine promise. To this, Bossuet replied, that it was evident from scripture,

that, though a great, or even the greater part of the chosen people had apostatized, still the true worship of God never was extinguished, never ceased to be gloriously discernible either in Israel or Judah ;—that, in the times of their greatest apostasies, the true worship was retained by a great portion of the people of each kingdom ; and that each of them had a regular succession of prophets ; so that the inspired writers (Paral. xxxvi. 5. Jo. xi. 7. xxv. 1. 4.) scrupled not to say, that, every morning and night, the Almighty Word arose and warned the chosen seed, by the mouths of his prophets, against the surrounding idolatry. “ These prophets,” continued Bossuet, “ were themselves a part of the people of God ; they kept the people to their duty ; and preserved a large part of them from corruption : and thus, though a frightful portion of them, and perhaps even the mass of them, fell into idolatry, there were always among them, those, who preserved pure, and visible to all, the deposit of the true worship.” “ To them,” Bossuet said, “ Ezechiel (xliv. 13.) alluded, when he mentioned the Priests and Levites, who, when the children of Israel went astray, always observed the ceremonies of the sanctuary ; served the Lord, and appeared before him, to offer him victims.”

Here the conversation with M. Coton finished.—While they waited the arrival of M. Claude, to open the conference, Bossuet took occasion to

mention to mademoiselle de Duras, that, in the course of the proposed conference, he would prove to her satisfaction, three things;—the first, that the huguenots acted, as if they believed that the authority of their church was infallible; the second, that, though they acted in this manner, it was a maxim among them, that every individual, however ignorant, was obliged to believe he understood the scriptures, better than all the rest of the church.—This seemed to surprise her much:—He proceeded to mention to her the third, which she thought was still more strange;—that it was an article of the huguenot creed, that there was a period of time, during which, a *Christian* was obliged to doubt, whether the scripture were inspired by God, whether the gospel were a truth or a fable, and whether Jesus Christ were an impostor, or the teacher of salvation. He undertook to force M. Claude to confess all this, or to convince her, that all of it was an evident and direct consequence of his principles.

After this, they were informed that M. Claude was come, and the conference began. We can only pretend to present the reader, with a short outline of it: but we can confidently assure him, that, if he takes an interest in such polemic discussions, he will be abundantly gratified by perusing the whole of the account given of it by Bossuet. M. Claude's account of it has not fallen into the hands of the writer.

Bossuet began the conference, by asking, “if it

“ were not among the articles of the reformed
“ church of France, that disputes on faith should
“ be determined, if possible, by the consistory ;
“ that, if they were not determined by the con-
“ sistory, they should be determined by the pro-
“ vincial synod ; that, if they were not determined
“ by the provincial synod, they should be determined
“ by the holy national assembly ; and that those,
“ who refused to acquiesce in the determination of
“ the national assembly, were to be declared out of
“ the pale of the church, and excommunicated.”

He further asked, “ if the circular letter of the
“ reformed churches, when they sent their depu-
“ ties to the national assembly, were not expressed
“ in the following words : We promise, before
“ God, to submit to all that shall be resolved in
“ your holy assembly ; convinced, as we are, that
“ God will preside over it, and guide you by his
“ Holy Spirit, into all truth and equity, by the
“ rule of his word.” Bossuet concluded by ob-
serving, that by this, the reformed church *appeared*
to act as if they acknowledged the infallibility of the
national assembly.—This was the first of the three
points, which he had undertaken to mademoiselle
de Duras, to bring M. Claude to confess.

The facts, mentioned by Bossuet, were candidly
admitted by M. Claude : but he denied the con-
clusion, which Bossuet drew from them ; and, in a
speech of some length, which Bossuet praises for its
neatness and method, explained the nature of the

arrangements mentioned by Bossuet. He said, that the different assemblies, mentioned by Bossuet, had different degrees of jurisdiction ; but that, in all of them, it was a jurisdiction of discipline ; and that the intrinsic value of the truth of their decisions, and even of the decision of the national assembly, depended solely, on their conformity to the word of God : and thus, according to M. Claude, an ultimate power of enforcing discipline, but no infallibility in doctrine, was vested by them in the national assembly. A discussion then took place, between Bossuet and M. Claude, to bring this to issue, and every word of it is highly interesting. At the end of it, Bossuet observed to M. Claude, that, if he understood him rightly, both the intermediate submission required to the consistory and provincial synod, and the ultimate submission required to the national assembly, were conditional ; or, in other words, that a conscientious submission could only be required, if the party thought their determinations were conformable to the word of God.—To this, M. Claude assented : “ ‘Then,’” said Bossuet, “ the profession of submission might “ be equivalently couched, in these words ;— “ I swear to submit to what you shall decide, if I “ shall think your decision is conformable to the “ word of God.—What does this really amount “ to ?” A short silence ensued : Bossuet renewed the conference, by saying,—“ You believe, that an “ individual may call in question the sentence of

“ your church, even when your church pronounces
“ in the last resort.” “ No, Sir,” answered M.
Claude, “ it should not be said, that an individual
“ can lawfully doubt in such a case, as there is
“ every appearance that the judgment of the
“ church will be right.”—“ To say that there is an
“ *appearance*,” Bossuet replied, “ is to say that
“ there is a doubt.” “ But,” answered M. Claude,
“ there is more than an appearance. Jesus Christ
“ has himself promised, that those who truly seek
“ him, shall find him. Now, it should be *pre-*
“ *sumed*, in favour of the assemblies, that they seek
“ him truly; and will, therefore, be certain of
“ finding him. To be sure, if it should appear
“ that there are cabals, or any other suspicious
“ circumstance in the national synod, the confi-
“ dence in it might be lessened, or absolutely
“ withdrawn.” “ Then, let us leave these factions
“ and cabals,” said Bossuet, “ out of the question.
“ Let us suppose, that there is no faction, no
“ cabal, nothing improper; and that every thing
“ passes in perfect order: must its decision be
“ received without examination?” M. Claude
admitted that the right of examination existed.
“ Then,” said Bossuet, “ you admit, that every
“ individual, whoever he be, may believe, and even
“ ought to believe, that it may happen to him
“ to understand the word of God better than
“ the national assembly; and even better than a
“ council assembled from the four quarters of the

“ world.—For, on what can this right or duty of
 “ examination be founded, but because the indi-
 “ vidual may justly conceive, that he himself
 “ understands the word of God better than those,
 “ whose decision he has a right to examine?”

This was the second point, which Bossuet had promised mademoiselle de Duras to make M. Claude admit.

Bossuet now considered that he had set M. Claude between the horns of a perfect dilemma.—If M. Claude contended for the duty of submission, to the sentence of the national assembly, under pain of excommunication, Bossuet opposed to him his acknowledgment of the right of individuals to try the propriety of that sentence by their private judgments;—if M. Claude admitted this right of private judgment in an individual, Bossuet opposed to him the assembly’s right to excommunicate him for exercising it.—Contending for the former, M. Claude admitted the first,—contending for the latter, M. Claude admitted the second of the positions, which Bossuet had promised mademoiselle de Duras to make him confess.

The conference, however, proceeded. “ Surely,” said Bossuet, “ this right of individual examina-
 “ tion, which you recognize in each individual,
 “ must be accompanied with the highest individual
 “ presumption.”—“ That, by no means follows,” replied M. Claude; “ When the synagogue de-
 “ clared that Jesus Christ was not the Messiah,

“ promised by the prophets, and condemned him
“ to death, would not an individual, who believed
“ him to be the true Christ, have judged better
“ than the synagogue? Could you accuse such an
“ individual of *presumptuously* believing, that he
“ understood the scriptures better than all the
“ synagogue?”

A more able reply than this of M. Claude cannot be conceived. It produced a great effect on all the persons present.—Bossuet informs us, in his relation of the conference, that this effect of it was observed by him: that, though he himself was fully aware of the answer which he ought to give to it, he was afraid that he might not express it properly; and that he therefore made a silent prayer to God, that he would inspire him to express it, in such terms, as would remove the impression, made by M. Claude on the minds of the audience.—After a moment’s silence, he addressed M. Claude in these words:
“ You say, that my assertion, that the individual,
“ who sets up his own private opinion, in opposition
“ to that of the whole church, must be guilty of in-
“ tolerable presumption, fixes the charge of equal
“ presumption on those, who believed in Jesus
“ Christ, in opposition to the sentence of the
“ synagogue, which had pronounced him guilty of
“ blasphemy. Most certainly, my assertion proves
“ nothing of the kind. When an individual *now* sets
“ up his own private opinion in opposition to that
“ of the whole church, he sets it up against the

“ highest authority on earth, as the earth contains
“ no authority, to which an appeal from that au-
“ thority can be made. But, when the synagogue
“ condemned Jesus Christ, there was on earth a
“ much higher authority than the synagogue ; to
“ that authority the individual, who reprobated
“ the proceedings of the synagogue, might appeal.
“ Truth herself *then* visibly existed among men ; the
“ Messiah, the eternal Son of God,—He, to whom
“ a voice from above had rendered testimony, by
“ proclaiming before the whole people, that he was
“ the well-beloved Son of God,—He, who restored
“ the dead to life, gave sight to the blind, and
“ did so many miracles, that the Jews themselves
“ confessed no man had done the like before him,—
“ He, the Jesus himself, then existed among men ;
“ and was *the visible external authority*, to whom
“ there was a lawful appeal from the synagogue.--
“ His authority was infallible. I hear you say,
“ that it was a contested authority. I know that
“ it was contested ; but, as a christian, *you* are
“ bound to say, that no individual could reasonably
“ or conscientiously contest it.—It was not there-
“ fore presumption, it was duty to disobey the
“ synagogue and to believe in Christ. Bring
“ back to me Jesus Christ in person ; bring him
“ teaching, preaching, and working miracles, I no
“ longer want the church.—But don’t take the
“ church from me, unless you give me Jesus Christ
“ in person. You say you have his word. Yes,

“ certainly! we have his holy, adorable word!
“ But, what is to be done with those who under-
“ stand it in a wrong sense? Jesus Christ is not
“ present in person to set them right; they must
“ therefore obey the church. Before Jesus Christ
“ appeared among the Jews, they were bound
“ to obey the synagogue: When the synagogue
“ failed, Jesus Christ came among men, to teach
“ them all truth, and they were bound to obey his
“ voice: When he returned to his Father, he left
“ us his church, and we are bound to obey her
“ voice. There is not,—no, there is not on earth,
“ any visible higher authority, to which you can
“ appeal from her.”

This, according to Bossuet’s account, set Claude within a second dilemma:—if he said that the sentence of the national assembly was not to be questioned, Bossuet proved his assertion to mademoiselle de Duras, that the huguenots acted, as if they believed the authority of their church was infallible; if he said the sentence of the national assembly might be questioned, Bossuet’s assertion, that it was a maxim of the huguenot church, that every individual might believe that he understood the scriptures, better than the highest authority in his communion, was equally proved.—With much apparent reluctance, M. Claude veered to the latter position;—and thus Bossuet professes to have performed his second promise to mademoiselle de Duras.

We now come to the last of the three points, which Bossuet had promised mademoiselle de Duras, to make M. Claude confess, and which appeared to her the strangest of the three ;—that, “ in
“ the opinion of huguenots, there is a period,
“ during which a *Christian* is under a necessity of
“ doubting, whether the Bible be inspired by God,
“ whether the Gospel be truth or fable, and whether
“ Jesus Christ were a teacher of truth or an
“ impostor.”—Bossuet opened the discussion of this point by asking M. Claude, “ if a Christian,
“ when he has the Gospel put, for the first time,
“ into his hands, must necessarily doubt, whether
“ it be divinely inspired, before he can make an act
“ of faith of its being the word of God.” M. Claude replied, that “ in such a situation, a Christian does
“ not doubt, but is ignorant, whether the Gospel
“ is divinely inspired. And permit me,” he said to Bossuet, “ to put the same question to you, substituting, in my question, the church, whenever,
“ in yours, you introduce the Gospel. I therefore
“ ask you, in my turn, whether a Christian, who
“ has the authority of the church, for the first
“ time, proposed to him, must not, before he makes
“ an act of faith of it, necessarily doubt and examine
“ the grounds of that authority? You see that
“ the question forces each of us into the same difficulties ;—whatever you say on the subject, in
“ reference to the Gospel, I shall say upon it, in
“ reference to the church.”

The disputants were now fairly at issue on two points;—the first, whether, in respect to the Gospel, M. Claude, by acknowledging the right of previous examination, admitted, that, while that examination lasted, a *Christian* must necessarily doubt that the scripture was the word of God; the second, whether, in respect to the church, the same arguments should not force a similar confession from Bossuet. They were distinct points, and Bossuet appears to have been anxious to keep them distinct.

“ I perceive,” he said to M. Claude, “ the tendency of your expressions.—Whether you will argue, or will have a right to argue, from my doctrine, respecting a Christian’s faith in the church, as I shall argue from your doctrine respecting a Christian’s faith in the Gospel, we shall quickly see. For the present, let us stick to the fact.—I aver that, according to the principles of your church, there is a moment, (I mean the period of examination) in which a Christian, (*I don’t speak of an infidel*) must doubt of the Gospel and of Christ.” “ I have said,” M. Claude answered, “ that he is ignorant; he does not doubt.” “ Can he then,” said Bossuet, “ when the Gospel is thus, for the first time, presented to him, make an act of divine faith, that the book presented to him is the word of God.” “ He cannot;” answered M. Claude, “ he can only

“ believe it out of deference to the authority of his
“ parents, or of some other person. He is a
“ catechumen.”—“ No,” said Bossuet, “ he is
“ not a catechumen; he is a Christian; he has
“ been baptized, and the alliance which baptism
“ externally sealed on him, has been internally
“ sealed on his heart, by the Holy Ghost.”—
“ On that point,” said M. Claude, “ there are
“ two opinions;” but M. Claude ingenuously
added, “ I admit it.—“ Then,” said Bossuet, “ it
“ follows, that, in virtue of the faith infused into
“ him in his baptism, a Christian, who has attained
“ the use of reason, is qualified to make an act of
“ faith, when it is presented to him. I therefore,
“ ask you, whether, before he has examined the
“ Gospel, a Christian can make this act of faith:—
“ ‘ I believe the scripture to be the word of God,
“ ‘ as I believe God to exist?’ ”—M. Claude said
that, after the Christian had read the scripture,
he believed it to be the word of God by divine
faith, but that, until he had read it, he could not
be led to this conclusion by human reasoning
only.

“ But human reason,” said Bossuet, “ is always
“ fallible, and therefore always doubtful. And
“ thus, according to your principles, there is a
“ moment,—(that of examination), during which,
“ *the Christian* necessarily doubts, or, if you prefer
“ the expression, is ignorant of what you call the

“ fundamental article of faith,—‘ that the scripture
 “ is the word of God,’ and therefore, during the
 “ whole time of examination, is an infidel.”

In this manner, Bossuet professes to have performed his third promise to malle de Duras : it remained for him to defend himself against M. Claude’s intimation, that, in maintaining a Christian’s obligation to believe, with divine faith, the authority of the church, it would be necessary for Bossuet to admit that he must previously examine the point, as he must doubt it, during the continuance of such an examination, and be therefore, during the whole of that period, an infidel.

“ No such consequence attends the roman-catholic doctrine,” said Bossuet. “ The first instant after a roman-catholic or *any Christian* comes to the use of reason, he may make this act of divine faith,—I believe the church.—I entreat you to observe, that I am speaking of a baptized person, of a Christian, not of an infidel. In virtue of his baptism, the Christian has the habit of true faith, and therefore believes, when he attains the use of reason, in God the Father, in God the Son, in God the Holy Ghost, and in the holy catholic church. The Apostles’ creed contains all these articles : and the Apostles’ creed is not a set of conclusions, to which a child arrives by examination, but a declaration of the faith infused into him at his baptism by the Holy Ghost. Against this, the

“ infidel may argue consistently with his tenets ; a
 “ Christian cannot. Thus the doctrine of roman-
 “ catholics is wholly free from the difficulty you
 “ have intimated. All roman-catholics, all Chris-
 “ tians, except protestants, believe the divine au-
 “ thority of the church to be an article of faith,
 “ infused by the Holy Ghost into every Christian
 “ at his baptism. Now, it is a tenet of the church,
 “ that the scripture is the word of God.—Thus,
 “ from the first instant of their reason, the roman-
 “ catholics believe their church and the tenets of
 “ their church ; so that, as there never is a moment,
 “ in which a roman-catholic doubts of the church,
 “ there never is a moment, in which he doubts of
 “ the divine inspiration of the scripture, which is
 “ a tenet of his church. But you, who deny the
 “ authority of the church, are driven to the terrible
 “ inconvenience of being obliged to admit, that
 “ there is a period, during which, it is in the ne-
 “ cessity of things, that *the Christian* doubts, or, if
 “ you prefer the expression, is without the belief
 “ of this fundamental article of faith,—the divine
 “ inspiration of the scripture.”

This was strong reasoning ; but M. Claude
 rallied.—“ This way of reasoning,” he shrewdly
 observed, “ must make every person decide in
 “ favour of his own church. The Greeks, Armi-
 “ nians, Æthiopians, even we, whom you think so
 “ much in the wrong, are baptized ; by your ac-
 “ count, therefore, all of us actually have the true

“ faith, the true scriptures, and the true interpretation of them.”

Bossuet’s acknowledgment of the force of this argument, and of the great impression which it made on the persons, present at the conference, should be mentioned in his own words.—“ A more foreible objection than M. Claude’s could not be urged. The answer to it immediately occurred to me, but I was apprehensive of not expressing it in a manner to make it fully understood. I trembled as I spoke, for I thought the salvation of a soul was at stake ; and I offered a prayer to God, that, as he made the truth known to me, he would furnish me with words, that would enable me to present it, in its full light, to my hearers. My dispute was with a man, who listened patiently, expressed himself with clearness and strength, and was able to avail himself of any thing, which the least want of precision opened to attack.”

Such were Bossuet’s feelings, as he himself has expressed them, on M. Claude’s observation : the reader, probably, is curious to see how he delivered himself from the consequences to which it seemed to lead. He remarked to M. Claude, that the reformed church was to be distinguished from the Greek, and from all the other churches, which he had mentioned ; as the members of all those churches professed both to receive, *at their baptism*, the faith of the *true church*, and to believe, with

divine faith at their first use of reason, her divine authority: so that, in their own opinion, there never was a moment, in which the members of those churches were without faith in the true church, or faith in her authority, or faith in her scriptures:—while, on the other hand, M. Claude, and all the communicants with his church, admitted it to be an article of their doctrine, that, during all the period which preceded, or was employed in examination, they had not faith in the true church, in her authority, or in her scriptures; and thus, as to the point immediately under discussion, all those churches might be cited against M. Claude.

After this preliminary observation, Bossuet proceeded to consider M. Claude's assertion, that, as the members of all those churches, and also the members of the huguenot churches were baptized, it necessarily followed from Bossuet's own doctrine, that they continued, while they were members of the church, in which they were baptized, to possess the true faith, the true scriptures, and the true interpretation of them.—This brought the disputants to immediate issue:—Bossuet replied, that, when a person is baptized, the Holy Ghost confers on him, without regard to the faith of the person who baptizes him, or the church, in which he is baptized, the faith of the church mentioned in the Apostles creed; the faith of the holy catholic church:—that the baptized person continues a member of that true church, till the example of his

parents, or some other circumstance, seduces him from it. “ Thus,” said Bossuet, “ the members
 “ of the churches, which have been mentioned, and
 “ the members of your church, are in error, not
 “ on account of an erroneous faith, which they received in baptism, but because they have abandoned the true faith,—the faith of the holy catholic church, which they received in baptism.”

This was Bossuet’s reply to his adversary’s attack :—and the conference now drew to its conclusion.

Both Bossuet and M. Claude published accounts of it ; and, as it generally happens in such cases, their accounts disagreed. On this circumstance, Bossuet expresses himself with great good temper and moderation.—“ It is not my intention,” he says, “ to accuse M. Claude of wilful misrepresentation. It is difficult to remember, with
 “ precision, the things which have been said, or
 “ the order in which they were spoken ; the mind
 “ often confounds things that were spoken, with
 “ things that occurred afterwards ; and thus, without the slightest intentional aberration from it,
 “ truth is often disfigured.—All I say of M.
 “ Claude, he has my leave to say of me.” This is the language of a Christian and a gentleman. Violence ever injures the cause, which it is intended to support, and often refutes the accusation, in aid of which it is used.

CHAP. VIII.

*Bossuet's History of the Variations of the
Protestant Churches.*

THIS is the most considerable, in size, of the controversial works of Bossuet.—In the five first books of it, Bossuet gives a succinct account of the rise and first progress of the Reformation in Germany. In the sixth, he professes to expose the conduct of Luther and Melancthon, in sanctioning, with other divines of their party, the marriage of the landgrave of Hesse, with a second wife, during the life of his first wife. The seventh and eighth books are confined to the Reformation in England, during the reigns of Henry the eighth and Edward the sixth. The history of the Reformation in Germany is resumed in the eighth book; the ninth gives an account of the rise and first progress of the Calvinists in France; the tenth is employed on the Reformation in England, during the reign of queen Elizabeth, and on the civil wars of France, which he accuses her of fomenting, and which, he affirms, were produced by a leading principle of the early reformers, that it is lawful for subjects to levy war against their sovereign, on account of religion.

Here, Bossuet breaks off, to give, in his eleventh book, an account of the Albigenses and other sects,

who separated from the church of Rome, in the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, and were said by the huguenots, to be their religious ancestors. The twelfth and thirteenth books contain an account of the huguenots from the period, in which his eighth book left them, till the Synod of Gap. The fourteenth book contains an account of the disputes between Arminius and Gomar, the wars, more than civil, between the Synods of Dordrecht, Charenton and Geneva; and the reprobation of them all, by the huguenot churches of France.

The fifteenth book is of the dogmatical kind; its object is, to show the divine authority of the church of God; her marks, and the claims of the church of Rome to the exclusive possession of them. —It should be observed, that, in every part of the work, with the exception of the eleventh book, in which Bossuet professes to give an account of the predecessors of Luther, he relates the events, which are the subjects of his history, in chronological order.

Most readers of the present times, will probably think, that the eleventh and fourteenth are the most interesting books of this celebrated work. A full and impartial history of the irregular attempts at reformation, as they are termed by Dr. Robertson, which are the subject of the eleventh book, has employed several pens in Germany and Holland, but has not attracted as much attention, either in

France or England, as the subject seems to deserve. Some modern writers have professed to deduce the authors of the tremendous revolution of our times, from the ancient Manichees, through the Knights-Templars, the sectaries of the middle ages, and some of the reformers of the sixteenth century. In their attempts to establish this system, they have maintained several extravagant opinions : but arguments, plausible at least, are not wanting to support its general probability.—There seems reason to believe, that, after the death of Manes, the European Manichees retreated, and carried their doctrines with them, into the East ; that they made a second appearance in Europe, about the beginning of the ninth century ; that, under the various appellations of Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses, Hussites, Bohemians, Bogards, Brethren of the Free Spirit, Wickliffites and Lollards, they and their disciples, during that and the three ensuing centuries, spread themselves over Europe ; that they diverged into sects, some of whom were hostile to the constituted authorities of the times, both in church and state ; and that, after various vicissitudes of fortune, the disciples of some of those sects finally triumphed, in the sixteenth century, in a considerable portion of Europe, and filled it, with disorganizing principles, which were never wholly eradicated. The doctrines and adventures of these sectaries, from the time of their return to Europe, till the commencement of Luther's reformation,

are shortly related by Bossuet. Here, he is met by many protestant adversaries; the ablest of whom confessedly is M. James Basnage, who published, in opposition to the “Variations,” his “History of the Reformed Churches,” a learned work; but which, even in the opinion of some writers of his own communion, is not entitled to the praise of impartiality.—Bossuet is also opposed by Mosheim; but both Basnage and Mosheim concede much to him. On this topic, the interesting chapter of the latter, on the *History of the Anabaptists or Memnonites, in Doctor Maclaine’s Translation, vol. 4, page 129*, contains much instructive matter.

The fourteenth book of Bossuet’s “History of the Variations” is particularly interesting, as he attempts to show in it, by much curious and instructive evidence, a natural gravitation of every sect, which separates from the church of Rome, into Socinianism. Some time after Bossuet’s “History of the Variations” made its appearance, he published his six eloquent Addresses to the French protestants. In the last, he treats, at length, of this supposed socinian tendency of the Reformation. He proves in it, from the confessions of the celebrated Jurieu, that, before the close of the seventeenth century, socinianism abounded in the United Provinces; and that the dispersion of the French huguenots, in consequence of the Edict of Nantes, revealed to the terrified reformers of the original

school, the alarming secret of the preponderance of socinianism, even in the reformed churches of France. The members of them, being, by Jurieu's account, no longer under the control of the civil power, disseminated their socinian principles, every where, with the greatest activity and success. Even in England, Jurieu pretended to discover the effect of their exertions. He mentions, that, in 1698, thirty-four French refugee ministers, residing in London, addressed a letter to the Synod, then sitting in Amsterdam, in which they declared that socinianism spread so rapidly, that, if the Ecclesiastical Assemblies applied no remedy to it, or used only palliatives, the evil would be incurable.—Of these lamentations of Jurieu, Bossuet avails himself with the greatest skill :—they brought Jurieu into great disgrace among his own brethren.

It has often been observed, that contraries meet in their extremes. Two writers more contrary, in every sense of that word, to each other, than Bossuet and the late author of the “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,” cannot be mentioned : yet, in one of the most curious passages of that extraordinary work, Mr. Gibbon adopts and aggravates all these charges of Bossuet. (See ch. LIV).

CHAP. IX.

*Bossuet's personal conduct towards Protestants ;
—his principles respecting Religious Toleration.*

IN the personal conduct of Bossuet towards protestants, there was nothing to censure, and much to praise. When the Edict of Nantes brought the question of Religious Toleration into discussion, his personal conduct towards the sufferers under that Edict, appears to have been highly commendable.

As to his general conduct ;—all protestant writers, who have mentioned it, agree that it was marked with good breeding and moderation ; and, while they allow, that there was warmth and earnestness in his religious disputes with them, confess that he willingly admitted equal warmth and earnestness in his protestant opponents. This is particularly noticed by Saurin, in his *Factum* against the celebrated Jean Baptiste Rousseau. He mentions in it, that he found Bossuet a rough disputant, but that Bossuet permitted him to be equally rough. A protestant minister, of great reputation among his party, mentions Bossuet in a letter printed by his benedictine editors, as a prelate, “ whom God had wonderfully gifted ; and who “ was held, in particular veneration, even by protestants.”—Alluding to a controversial work of

“ his own, the same gentleman mentions, that the
“ high breeding and christian manners of Bossuet
“ had greatly contributed to overcome his repug-
“ nance to every thing which savoured of contro-
“ versy.” “ If you consider with attention,” he
writes to his correspondent, “ what is passing, you
“ will find, that Bossuet employs no means for
“ procuring our conversion, which are not agree-
“ able to the spirit of the Gospel. He preaches,
“ composes works, writes letters, and endeavours
“ by means, worthy of his character and the true
“ spirit of Christianity, to make us quit our faith.
“ We should be grateful for the charitable inten-
“ tions of the great prelate, and, without prejudice,
“ examine writings that evidently come from a
“ heart, which loves us and desires our salvation.”
(*Ben. ed. of Bossuet's works. Tom. ix. pp. 429.*
490). In all his controversies with the protestants,
he abstained from personalities, injurious language
and insult.—“ With the strictest truth,” these are
his expressions in a sermon preached by him, on
the religious professions of a young lady, recently
converted to the catholic religion,—“ With the
“ strictest truth, I can declare, that the most tender
“ desire of my heart, the most ardent of my daily
“ prayers, is the salvation of our separated brethren.
“ I am touched to my very soul, when I behold
“ *persons so honourable, and, as God well knows,*
“ *so loved and revered by me,* walking in dark-
“ ness. I trust that I shall always express myself

“ in such a manner, as will give my arguments,
“ (all which shall ever be drawn from the scriptures,
“ and the holy fathers, the best interpreters of the
“ scriptures), their full weight, without using an
“ injurious expression.”

The revocation of the edict of Nantes, brought Bossuet's principles on religious liberty to the test.—The persecution of the huguenots, which followed, (called from the dragoon troops employed in it, the dragonade)—was condemned by the greatest and best men in France. M. d'Aguesseau, the father of the celebrated chancellor, resigned his office of intendant of Languedoc, rather than continue a witness of it : his son repeatedly mentions it with abhorrence. Fenelon, Flechier and Bossuet, confessedly the ornaments of the Gallican church, lamented it. To the utmost of their power, they prevented the execution of the edict, and softened its severities, when they could not prevent them.

This practical condemnation of the resort to temporal power, in effecting religious conversion, does all these illustrious characters the greater honour, as the doctrine of religious toleration was, at that time, little understood. It is painful to add, that, in a studied letter, written to M. de Basville, intendant of Languedoc, (*Ben. ed. vol. x. p. 293*), Bossuet seems to admit, in theory, the general right of christian princes, to enforce acts of religious conformity, by wholesome severities ; and thus allows

them, for effecting a spiritual good, a resort to temporal means, which the Divine Founder of our faith so explicitly disclaimed for himself.

CHAP. X.

The correspondence of Bossuet and Leibniz, on the re-union of the Lutheran Protestants, to the Roman-catholic Church.

THIS correspondence forms one of the most interesting events in the life of Bossuet ; and the letters, of which it consists, and the other written documents, which relate to it, are highly interesting. The writer will attempt to present the reader with a short account, 1st, of the circumstances which led to this correspondence ; 2dly, of the project of re-union, delivered by Molanus, a lutheran divine, and Bossuet's sentiments on that project ; 3dly, of the intervention of Leibniz in the negotiation ; and, 4thly, of the project suggested by Bossuet, and the principal reasons, by which he contended for its reception.

1st, It appears that, towards the seventeenth century, the emperor Leopold, and several sovereign princes in Germany, conceived a project of re-uniting the Roman-catholic and Lutheran churches. The duke of Brunswick, who had recently em-

braced the roman-catholic religion, and published his “ Fifty Reasons” for his conversion, (once a popular work of controversy), and the duke of Hanover, the father of the first prince of the illustrious house, which now fills the throne of England, were the original promoters of the attempt. It was generally approved; and the mention of it at the diet of the empire, was favourably received. Some communications upon it took place, between the emperor and the ducal princes: and, with all their knowledge, several conferences were held, upon the subject, between certain distinguished roman-catholic and protestant divines. In these, the bishop of Neustadt, and Molanus the abbot of Lokkum, took the lead. The first had been consecrated bishop of Tina in Bosnia, then under the dominion of the Turks, with Ordinary Jurisdiction over some parts of the Turkish territories. His conduct had recommended him to Innocent the 11th, and that pope had directed him to visit the protestant states in Germany, and inform him of their actual dispositions, in respect to the church of Rome. In consequence of this mission, he became known to the emperor, who appointed him to the see of Neustadt, in the neighbourhood of Vienna. Molanus was director of the protestant churches and consistories of Hanover. Both were admirably calculated for the office intended for them on this occasion: each enjoyed the confidence of his own party, and was esteemed by the

other : each was profoundly versed in the matters in dispute ; each possessed good sense, moderation, and conciliating manners, and each had the success of the business at heart, and a fixed purpose, that nothing, but a real difference on some essential article of doctrine, should frustrate the project.

The effect of the first conferences was so promising, that the emperor and the two princes resolved, that they should be conducted in a manner more regular, and more likely to bring the object of them to a conclusion. With this view, the business was formally intrusted, by both the princes, to Molanus alone ; and the emperor published a rescript, dated the 20th March 1691, by which, he gave the bishop of Neustadt, full authority to treat, on all matters of religion, with the states, communities, and individuals of the empire ; reserving to the ecclesiastical and imperial powers, their right to confirm the acts of the bishop, as they should judge advisable. Under these auspicious circumstances, the conference between the bishop of Neustadt and Molanus began.

But, before the events, which we have mentioned, took place, a correspondence, on the subject of a general re-union between catholics and protestants, had been carried on for some time, between Pelisson and Leibniz. The former held a considerable rank among the French writers, who illustrated the reign of Lewis the fourteenth ; the latter, was eminently distinguished in the literary

world. In the exact sciences, he was inferior to Newton alone ; in metaphysics, he had no superior ; in general learning, he had scarcely a rival. He had recommended himself to the Brunswick family, by three volumes, which he had recently published, on the antiquities of that illustrious house ; and was then engaged in the investigation of its Italian descent, and early German shoots. The result of it, under the title of *Origines Guelphicæ*, was published after his decease, by Scheidius, and is considered to be a perfect model of genealogical history. He was also thoroughly conversant in the theological disputes of the times ; and, in all the questions of dogma or history, which enter into them.

His correspondence with Pelisson, came to the knowledge of Louisa, princess Palatine and abbess of Maubrusson. She was a daughter of Frederic, the elector and count Palatine of the Rhine, and a sister of the duchess of Hanover. In early life, she had been converted to the roman-catholic religion, and had the conversion of her sister very much at heart. With this view, she sent to her, the correspondence between Leibniz and Pelisson, and received from her, an account of what was passing between the bishop of Neustadt and Molanus. Both the ladies were anxious to promote the measure, and that Bossuet should take in it, the leading part, on the side of the catholics. This was mentioned to Lewis the fourteenth, and had his approbation. The emperor and both the princes,

by all of whom Bossuet was personally esteemed, equally approved of it; and it was finally settled, that Bossuet and Leibniz should be joined to the bishop of Neustadt and Molanus, and that the correspondence with Bossuet, should pass through the hands of madame de Brinon, who acted as secretary to the abbess of Maubrusson, and is celebrated, by the writers of the times, for her wit and dexterity in business. Thus the matter assumed a still more regular form, and much was expected from the acknowledged talents, learning, and moderation of the actors in it, and their patrons.

2. The conferences between the bishop of Neustadt and Molanus, continued for seven months, and ended in their agreeing on twelve articles, to serve for the basis of the discussion, on the terms of the re-union.

The bishop of Neustadt communicated these articles to Bossuet. He seems to have approved of them generally, but to have thought, that some alteration in them was advisable. This being mentioned to Molanus, he published his *Cogitationes Privatae*, a profound and conciliating dissertation. Without entering into any discussion, on the points in dispute between the churches, he suggested in it, a kind of truce, during which, there should be ecclesiastical communion between them: the lutherans were to acknowledge the pope, as the first of bishops in order and dignity: the church of Rome was to receive the lutherans, as her children,

without exacting from them, any retraction of their alleged errors, or any renunciation of the articles in their creed, condemned by the Council of Trent. The anathemas of that council were to be suspended, and a general council was to be convened, in which, the protestants were to have a deliberative voice : the sentence of that council was to be definitive, and, in the mean time, the members of each party were to treat the members of the other as brethren, whose errors, however great they might appear, were to be tolerated from motives of peace, and in consideration of their engagements to abandon them, if the council should pronounce against them. To shew the probability of a final accommodation, Molanus notices in his Dissertation, several points, in which, one party imputed to the other, errors not justly chargeable on them ; several, on which they disputed merely for want of rightly understanding each other ; and several, in which the dispute was of words only.

It appears that the bishop of Neustadt communicated this dissertation to Bossuet, and that Bossuet was delighted with the good sense, candour, and true spirit of conciliation which it displayed. He frequently, and always in terms of the highest praise, mentions its author in his letters. His own language was equally moderate and conciliating. " The Council of Trent," he says in one of his letters, " is our stay ;—but we shall not use it to

“ prejudice the cause. This would be to take for
 “ granted, what is in dispute between us. We
 “ shall deal more fairly with our opponents. We
 “ shall make the council serve for a statement and
 “ explanation of our doctrines. Thus, we shall
 “ come to an explanation on those points, in which
 “ either of us imputes to the other, what he does
 “ not believe, and in which we dispute only because
 “ we misconceive each other. This may lead us
 “ far; for *the abbot of Lokkum has actually con-*
 “ *ciliated the points so essential, of Justification*
 “ *and the Eucharist: nothing is wanting to him,*
 “ *on that side, but that he should be avowed.*
 “ *Why should we not hope to conclude, in the*
 “ *same manner, disputes less difficult and of less*
 “ *importance? Cela se peut pousser si avant,*
 “ *que M. l'abbé de Lokkum a concilié actuellement*
 “ *les points si essentiels de la Justification et du*
 “ *sacrifice de l'Eucharistie, et il ne lui manque de*
 “ *ce côté là, que de se faire avouer. Pourquoi*
 “ *ne pas esperer de finir par les memes moyens*
 “ *des disputes moins difficiles et moins impor-*
 “ *tautes?*”

With these rational and conciliatory dispositions,
 Bossuet and Molanus proceeded. But, after this
 stage of the business, Molanus disappears, and
 Leibniz comes on the scene.

3. A letter, written by Bossuet to M. de Brinon,
 having been communicated by her to Leibniz,
 opened the correspondence between him and

Bossuet. In that letter, Bossuet declared explicitly, that the church of Rome was ready to make concessions on points of discipline, and to explain doctrines, but would make no concession in respect to defined articles of faith ; and, in particular, would make no such concession, in respect to any, which had been defined by the Council of Trent. Leibniz's letter to M. de Brinon, in answer to this communication, is very important. He expresses himself in these terms : “ The bishop
“ of Meaux says, 1st, That the project delivered
“ to the bishop of Neustadt, does not appear to
“ him quite sufficient ; 2dly, That it is nevertheless
“ very useful, as every thing must have its begin-
“ ning ; 3dly, That Rome will never relax from
“ any point of doctrine, defined by the church,
“ and cannot capitulate, in respect to any such
“ article ; 4thly, That the doctrine, defined in the
“ Council of Trent, is received in and out of
“ France by all roman-catholics ; 5thly, That satis-
“ faction may be given to protestants, in respect
“ to certain points of discipline, or in the way of
“ explanation, and that this had been already done
“ in an useful manner, in some points, mentioned
“ in the project of the bishop of Neustadt. These
“ are the material propositions in the letter of the
“ bishop of Meaux, and I believe all these proposi-
“ tions true. Neither the bishop of Neustadt, nor
“ those, who negotiated with them, make any
“ opposition to them. There is nothing in them,

“ which is not conformable to the sentiments of
“ those persons. The third of them in particular,
“ which might be thought an obstacle to these
“ projects of accommodation, could not be un-
“ known to them; one may even say, that they
“ built on it.”

It seems difficult to deny, that, in this stage of the business, much had been gained to the cause of re-union. The parties were come to a complete understanding on the important articles of justification and the eucharist; and it was admitted both by Leibniz and Molanus, that, in their view of the concern, an accommodation might be effected between the roman-catholic and lutheran churches, though the former retained all her defined doctrines, and, in particular, all her doctrines defined by the Council of Trent. The question then was, what should be done in respect to the remaining articles in difference between the churches. It is to be wished that it had been left to Bossuet and Molanus to settle them, in the way of amicable explanation, in which, they had settled the two important articles, which we have mentioned. It is evident, from the passages, which we have cited from Bossuet,—that it was his wish that the business should proceed on that plan,—and that he had hopes of its success. Unfortunately, the business took another direction: Leibniz proclaimed, that, after every possible explanation should be given, the lutheran church would still retain some articles,

contrary to the defined doctrines of the Church of Rome, and anathematized by the Council of Trent. To remove the final effect of this objection, Leibniz held out Molanus's first project, that the lutherans should express a general acquiescence in the authority of the church, and promise obedience to the decisions of a general council, to be called for the purpose of pronouncing on these points; and that, in consequence of these advances on their part, the anathemas of the Council of Trent should be suspended, and the lutherans received, provisionally, within the pale of the catholic church. To bring over Bossuet to this plan, he exerted great eloquence, and displayed no common learning.

4. But, the eloquence and learning of Leibniz were without effect. In language, equally temperate and firm, Bossuet adhered to his text, that, in matters of discipline, or any other matter, distinct from faith, the church of Rome would shew the utmost indulgence to the lutherans; but that, on articles of faith, and especially on those, propounded by the Council of Trent, there could be no compromise. But this, he confined to articles of faith alone; and, even on articles of faith, he wished to consult the feelings of protestants, as much as possible. He offered them every fair explanation of the tenets of the council; he required from them no retractation of their own tenets: "Molanus," he says, "will not allow retractation
"to be mentioned. It may be dispensed with;

“ it will be sufficient that the parties acknowledge
“ the truth, by way of declaration or explanation.
“ To this, the symbolical books gave a clear open-
“ ing, as appears by the passages, which have
“ been produced from them, and will appear, by
“ other passages, which may be produced from
“ them.”

If Bossuet was thus considerate in what regarded faith, it will easily be supposed, how indulgent his sentiments were, in regard to all that merely regarded discipline. A complete confession of faith being once obtained from the lutherans, he was willing to allow them, if they required it, communion under both kinds; that their bishops should retain their sees; and that, where there was no bishop, and the whole body of the people was protestant, under the care of a superintendant, the superintendant should be consecrated their bishop; that, where there was a catholic bishop, and a considerable part of the diocese was lutheran, the superintendant should be consecrated priest, and invested with rank and office; that the lutheran ministers should be consecrated priests; that provision should be made for their support; that such of their bishops and ministers as were married, might retain their wives; and that the consciences of those, who held possessions of the church, should be quieted, except in respect to hospitals, whose possessions, he thought, could not conscientiously be withheld from the poor objects of their founda-

tions ; and that every other arrangement should be made, by the church and state, which would be agreeable to the feelings and prejudices of their new brethren.

Such were the advances made by Bossuet ; and much discussion on them, took place between him and Leibniz. They continued ten years. They are very learned, and a scholar will read them with delight ; but, unfortunately, they rather retarded, than promoted their object. The real business ended, when Molanus quitted the scene.—We shall close this article, with the following extract from the last letter but one, written by Bossuet, on the subject. It is addressed to Leibniz, and bears date the 12th August 1701, ten years after his first letter on it was written.

“ Among the divines of the Confession of
 “ Augsburg, I always placed M. Molanus in the
 “ first rank, as a man, whose learning, candour
 “ and moderation, made him one of the persons,
 “ the most capable I have known, of advancing
 “ the NOBLE PROJECT OF RE-UNION.—In a letter,
 “ which I wrote to him some years ago, by the
 “ count Balati, I assured him, that, if he could
 “ obtain the general consent of his party, to what
 “ he calls his Private Thoughts, *Cogitationes*
 “ *Privatæ*, I promised myself, that, by joining to
 “ them the remarks, which I sent to him, on the
 “ Confession of Augsburg, and the other sym-
 “ bolic writings of the protestants, the work of the

“ re-union would be perfected, in all its most
 “ difficult and most essential parts; so that well-
 “ disposed persons might, in a short time, bring it
 “ to a conclusion.” The passage is so important,
 that it is proper to present it to the reader, in
 Bossuet’s own words. “ Parmi les Theologiens
 “ de la Confession d’Ausbourg, j’ai toujours mis
 “ au premier rang, M. l’abbé de Lokkum, comme
 “ un homme, dont le sçavoir, la candeur, et la
 “ modération le rendoient un des plus capables,
 “ que je connusse, pour avancer CE BEAU DESSEIN.
 “ Cela est si véritable, que j’ai cru devoir assurer
 “ ce docte Abbé, dans la réponse que je lui fis, il y
 “ a déjà plusieurs années, par M. le comte Balati,
 “ que s’il pouvoit faire passer ce qu’il appelle, ses
 “ Pensées Particulières, *Cogitationes Privatae*, a
 “ un consentement suffisant, je me promettois
 “ qu’en y joignant les remarques que je lui envoyois
 “ sur la Confession d’Ausbourg, et les autres
 “ écrits symboliques des Protestans, l’ouvrage de
 “ la Réunion seroit achevé dans ses parties les plus
 “ difficiles et les plus essentielles; en sorte, qu’il
 “ ne foudroit à des personnes bien disposées, que
 “ très peu de tems pour la conclure.”

This article is extracted from *Oeuvres Posthumes de Bossuet*, 1 vol.;—*Nouvelle edition des Oeuvres de Bossuet*, 11 vol.;—*Leibnizii Opera, studio Lud. Dutens*, 1 & 5 vol.;—and the *Pensees de Leibniz*, 2 vol. 8vo.

Dom de Foris, the Benedictine editor of the

new edition of the works of Bossuet, and the abbé Racine, *Abrégé de l'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, Tom. 13, are very severe in their censures of the conduct of Leibniz, in the negotiations for the re-union, and attribute its failure to his presumption and duplicity. To the writer of these pages, it appears clear, that Leibniz was sincere, in his wishes for the re-union; and that, if he occasioned its failure, it was unintentionally. While the business was in the hands of Bossuet and Molanus, it was a treaty, not for the re-union of the roman-catholic church, and all protestant churches, but for the re-union of the roman-catholic church and the lutheran church; and to this, Molanus's endeavours to reconcile differences were directed. Leibniz, whose principles in religion were much wider, than those of Molanus, seems to have wished that the negotiation should be placed on a broader basis, and extended to a re-union of the church of Rome, with every denomination of christians. This gave the negotiation a different direction, and in a great measure undid what had been so happily begun.—We have seen that, to the very last, Bossuet called out for Molanus, and entertained great hopes, that, if the matter were left to Molanus, and him, the noble project of re-union would be crowned with success. There is no part of Bossuet's literary or active life, in which he appears to greater advantage, or in a more amiable light, than on this occasion.

CHAP. XI.

The part taken by Bossuet, in the Declaration of the General Assembly of the Gallican Clergy in 1682, respecting Ecclesiastical Power.

THOUGH Lewis the fourteenth shewed, in every part of his life, a sincere respect for religion, he was frequently at variance with the pope.—At the time, of which we are now speaking, there was a considerable degree of irritation between him and the see of Rome. One of the principal points, in contest between them, respected the *Regâle*, or a right, claimed by the kings of France, to the revenues of every vacant see within their dominions, and to collate to the simple benefices within its jurisdiction. This was always viewed with jealousy, not only by the pope and foreign divines, but by the general body of the church of France ; and its warmest advocates treated it, rather as a tolerated, than an acknowledged claim. As such, it was admitted by the second council of Lyons ; but, with an express limitation of it to the territories, within which it was then actually exercised, and a denunciation of excommunication of those, who carried it beyond them. It was generally considered, that the provinces, bordering on the Alps and Pyrénées were not subject to it : and, on this ground, when Lewis the fourteenth attempted to exercise it,

during the vacancy of the see of Pamiers, the chapter resisted it ; and, after the bishop elect took possession of his see, he pronounced, in his episcopal court, a sentence in favour of the proceeding of his chapter. An appeal from that sentence was carried to the court of his metropolitan, the archbishop of Narbonne. There, the sentence of the bishop was reversed ; but the archbishop's sentence was reversed at Rome. Upon this, the king issued an edict, by which he asserted his prerogative : the edict was immediately registered by the parliament, and acquiesced in by the assembly of the French clergy, which was then sitting at Paris.

It was foreseen by them, that their conduct would give great offence to the pope, and they feared that he would proceed to extreme measures against them. To ward them off, the archbishop of Rheims addressed to the pope a letter, in the names of himself and the other prelates, of whom the assembly was composed ; in which, without pretending absolutely to justify their conduct, he said every thing which was likely to extenuate it, in the eyes of the pontiff, and to sooth his displeasure.— It was the composition of Bossuet, and written with equal force and address. The great services rendered by the king to religion, the magnitude of his power, and the possible consequences of incurring his displeasure, are held out in a strong point of view ; but in terms, which would rather lead the pope to feel them, from his own conclusions, than

by any direct expression of them in the letter. The real encroachment on the rights of the church was said to be small, and some advantages were alleged to result from the modifications, which the edict made in the exercise of the right. Several examples were cited of popes, and other eminent personages, who had waved their clearest rights, rather than provoke dangerous discussion.

At this time, pope Innocent the twelfth filled the papal chair. He was born in the dominions of Austria;—Father d'Avrigni describes him as a person warmly attached, in politics, to the interests of that house, and ill-disposed towards France: easily carried away by first impressions; inflexible in what he thought his duty, and had once resolved upon; lofty in his carriage; of great austerity, both in principles and conduct, and of repulsive manners. A pope of such a character was likely to be much offended by the king's extension of the *Regale*, and the prelates acquiescence in it. Immediately, on the receipt of their letter, the pope answered it by a very angry brief, in which he reproached them in severe terms, for their pusillanimity; annulled their proceedings; and required them to return to their duty, without delay;—and, in hopes of it, gave them his benediction.

The contents and style of the brief had been foreseen by the prelates. The public attention was engaged by the dispute; and the worst consequences were feared, as it was thought improbable,

that either the pontiff or the monarch would recede from his pretensions.

Without expecting the answer of the pope, the prelates petitioned the king to call a national council, or a general assembly of the clergy of France. The king preferred the latter, and it was opened on the 9th of November, in the year 1682, by a solemn high mass, at which Bossuet pronounced an eloquent sermon. He divided it into three parts. The first, was a panegyric of the church in general, and of the church of Rome in particular ; he professes to establish, in this part of his sermon, the spiritual supremacy conferred on St. Peter, notwithstanding his faults,—faults, he says, which should teach his successors, to exercise their great power with the humility and condescension, of which St. Peter left so admirable an example, in the manner, in which he listened to St. Paul, when he was reprov'd by him, for not walking in the right path, according to the Gospel. The second part of Bossuet's sermon is a panegyric on the kings and church of France. Here, he places in the strongest light, the services rendered by the kings of France to the Holy See, and their constant care to maintain, in their dominions, the rights and powers of the bishops, according to the general councils and institutions of the holy fathers. These, he calls the Liberties of the Gallican church ; and, by his account, they consist, in being subject to the canons, in a religious adherence to them, and

a careful preservation of those precious remains of ancient piety.—In the third part of his sermon, Bossuet proceeds to suggest the best means for preventing division and trouble. The most effectual, he says, of these means, are assemblies of bishops, the natural guardians of the canons and discipline. Thus, a council, held in the province of Lyons, in 1025, stood up against a privilege obtained from Rome, which was thought to be contrary to order ; thus, the second council of Limoges, in the same century, complained of a sentence, which, in a moment of surprise, John the eighteenth had given, contrary to the rules of the church : Bossuet quotes other examples of a similar nature ; and thus, he says, in every age, the church of France has known how to preserve her liberties, without failing in respect to the See of Rome, the mother and mistress of all churches. In this manner, while Bossuet expressed his respect to the Holy See, in the strongest terms, he insensibly disposed the minds of his audience, for the resolutions which should be presented them. His sermon has always been admired for its learning and eloquence, and for the lucid order of its arrangement. One of the most splendid parts of it, is that, in which he describes the beauty and dignity of the church of God.

The assembly then proceeded to the business before them ; and, as it branched into many different matters, they referred each of them to a

separate committee. That, which related to the affair of the Regâle, was considered of the greatest importance: M. Gilbert de Choiseul de Plessis-Praslin, bishop of Tournay, was placed at the head of that committee. He prepared their report, which is a perfect model of that difficult style of composition. The assembly then drew up their celebrated declaration, which, confessedly, was penned by Bossuet: it consists of four articles.

The first article declares, that the power, which Jesus Christ has given to St. Peter and his successors, vicars of Christ, relates only to spiritual things, and those, which concern salvation; and not to things, civil and temporal: so that, in temporals, kings and princes are not subject to the ecclesiastical power, and cannot, directly or indirectly, be deposed by the power of the keys; or their subjects discharged, by it, from the obedience, which they owe to their sovereigns, or from their oaths of allegiance.

The second article declares, that the plenitude of the power, which resides in the Holy See and the successors of St. Peter, in respect to spiritual concerns, does not derogate from what the Council of Constance has defined, in its fourth and fifth sessions, on the superior authority of general councils.

The third article declares, that the exercise of the apostolical power of the Holy See should be governed by the canons, which have been enacted by the Spirit of God, and are respected by all the

Christian world ; and that the rules, customs and usages, received by the kingdom and churches of France, and approved by the Holy See, should be inviolably preserved.

The fourth article declares, that, in questions of faith, the pope has the principal authority, and that his decisions extend over the universal church, and each church in particular ; but that, unless they have the consent of the church, they are not irreformable.

These articles passed unanimously, and the monarch was desired to publish them throughout his kingdom. He immediately issued an edict, by which, he ordered the Declaration to be registered by all the parliaments, bailiwicks, stewalties, universities and faculties of divinity and canon law, within his dominions. The edict forbad all persons, secular or regular, to write or teach any thing contrary to the declaration ; and that no person should be appointed professor of theology, who did not previously engage to teach no other doctrine.

The Declaration met with little opposition in France. Out of France, the case was very different, and an interesting and instructive narrative might be framed of the contests to which it gave rise : but the subject of these pages requires no more than a short mention of the part which Bossuet took in it. The most voluminous, by far, of the adversaries of the Declaration was Thomas Rocaberti, general of the Dominican friars, archbishop of Valentia,

and inquisitor general. He signalized his zeal against it by three folio volumes of his own composition, and by publishing, in 21 volumes folio, with the title *Bibliotheca Maxima Pontificia*, a compilation of all the tracts, which he could discover, in favour of the pontifical claims. Bossuet replied to the former of the works, by a treatise intitled, “ *La France Orthodoxe, ou Apologie de l’Ecole de Paris, et le Clergé de France, contre plusieurs Adversaires :*” —and by the desire of Lewis the fourteenth, he afterwards composed his larger work, *Defense de la Declaration de l’Assemblée Générale de France, de 1682, touchant la Puissance Ecclesiastique*.—Neither of these works were published in his life-time ; the last was written by him in Latin, and translated into French, by the abbé Leroy, under the direction of Bossuet’s nephew, the bishop of Troyes.

In the “ *Annales Philosophiques Morales et Littéraires, ou suite des Annales Catholiques,*” tom. I. 503, mention is made of a manuscript of the celebrated Fleury, which contains an historical account of this important declaration. The annalist mentions, that it appears from this manuscript, that Bossuet wisely moderated the too ardent spirit of some of the leading members of the assembly, who proposed much stronger terms, for the language of the Declaration, than those which were afterwards adopted by the assembly.

A good history of this interesting church docu-

ment is wanting ; a general notion of the points in dispute, of the import of the Declaration, and the arguments for and against the opinions which it expresses, may be formed by perusing, on the Cisalpine side of the question, the report of the bishop of Tournay, and the fourth, seventh and twelfth Discourses of Fleury ; and by perusing, on its Transalpine side, the *Memoires Chronologiques et Dogmatiques* of father d'Avrigni, and the celebrated Treatise, *Quis est Petrus* ?

The pope's claim to temporal power by divine right, has not perhaps at this time, a single advocate : but the other articles of the Declaration are still a subject of dispute. It should be observed, that the members of the assembly never proposed to hold out their Declaration as a decree respecting faith : they indeed considered it to be founded on the Scripture, on tradition, on solid and unanswerable arguments, but still to be no more than an opinion. The Ultramontanes predicate the same of their tenets. Moderate men of neither side tax the opposite tenets with heresy or schism. Each considers his own and his adversary's doctrine on these points, to be in the class of opinions, on which the church has not yet pronounced, and which, therefore, any individual may conscientiously hold.

CHAP. XII.

The other Controversial Writings of Bossuet.

THE principal controversial discussions in which Bossuet was engaged, have now been detailed; it remains to mention some in which he took a part, and which, though they are not of equal importance, have their interest, and attracted great attention in their time.

One of them turned on the signature of the celebrated *Formulary*, which condemned the book of Jansenius. Five propositions in it were extracted from that famous book, and condemned as heretical. That they were erroneous, none explicitly denied; but some controverted the existence of them in the work itself; some questioned the right of the church to pronounce, on that fact, dogmatically; and, on both or one of these grounds, several refused to sign the Formulary. Among them, the nuns of the convent of Port Royal were particularly noticed. By the desire of the archbishop of Paris, Bossuet waited on them, and exerted all his eloquence to induce them to sign it. With the same view, he addressed to them a letter, printed in the 10th volume of the Benedictine edition of his works, in which, with great strength of reasoning, but in very conciliating language, he states the

grounds, upon which the signature of the Formulary might be required.

Bossuet had serious skirmishes with the celebrated *Simôn*, the father of modern biblical criticism, on the supposed socinian tendency of *Simôn's* writings. That *Simôn* was a bold writer, is admitted, even at this time, when biblical criticism knows no restraint. It is easy to conceive, how bold his writings must have been thought, at a time when ancient and received opinions were so much, and with so much justice, respected. It was of his general propensity to new opinions that Bossuet most complains; and in his contests with *Simôn* he frequently triumphed. But *Simôn's* extensive rabbinical learning and profound knowledge of the Oriental languages, in which Bossuet had little skill, gave him an advantage over Bossuet, of which he sometimes successfully availed himself.

A dangerous boldness of opinion was also imputed by Bossuet to Du Pin, to Launoy, and to some other writers of celebrity. The acquaintance of the latter, he is said to have declined. Against the *Bibliothèque des Peres* of the former, he presented a memorial, which produced the seizure of the whole impression of the work.

In the disputes on the *Ceremonies of the Chinese*, Bossuet sided with their opponents.

CHAP. XIII.

Funeral Orations of Bossuet.

FUNERAL orations, of the description of those, of which we are now speaking, are little known in England, and are not, perhaps, a branch of oratory, the want of which we should greatly lament. It is evident that nothing should be heard from the pulpit, but the language of the gospel ; and nothing praised or blamed from it by any other standard.

But, when the orator has to pronounce the eulogy of a person, distinguished only by worldly greatness, it must be difficult for him to avoid speaking the language of the world. “ If,” says Massillon, in his celebrated address to Lewis the fourteenth, in the exordium of his sermon on the feast of All-Saints—“ if the world addressed your majesty
“ from this place, the world would not say, Blessed
“ are they who mourn. The world would say,
“ Blessed is the prince, who has never fought but
“ to conquer ; who has filled the universe with his
“ name ; who, through the whole course of a long
“ and flourishing reign, enjoys in splendor all
“ that men admire ;—extent of conquest, the
“ esteem of his enemies, the love of his people,
“ the wisdom of his laws. But, Sir, the language
“ of the gospel is not the language of the world.”

Here Massillon contrasts the two languages: which of them is the general language of funeral oration? Does it not almost always sound like that, which Massillon puts in the mouth of the world?

But this is not the only objection to funeral orations. The life of him, who is to be celebrated, though his achievements raise him to the height of human glory, is often wholly sterile of those actions, which the counsels, or even the precepts of the gospel inspire. Perhaps even, his general remissness in religious duty is known to his hearers. On such a life, what is to be said by him, who should only speak the language of the gospel? Yet, when once funeral orations become frequent, lives, such as these, will regularly claim and receive the usual tribute of funeral eulogy.

In another view, the frequency of funeral orations must be mischievous. It is obvious, that they are a tribute of distinction, which should be paid to none but the most exalted characters. Exalted rank will soon be thought a title to them: and the claim will descend. Even extraordinary wealth will sometimes put in and be allowed its claim.—Thus praise will become too general to confer honour; and one of the strongest incitements to virtue will be lost. Even on eloquence itself the effect of this promiscuous praise will be baneful. When the demand for it becomes frequent, the necessity of inventing a subject of praise, when it is wholly wanting, and of amplifying it, where it is merely

of ordinary size, must frequently occur. The consequence will be, that the natural and easy will often be excluded from such compositions, and they will be filled with that inflation of sentiment and expression, which a continued state of forced exertion makes unavoidable. That this is not exaggeration, is evident from the general style of funeral orations :—it may be truly said, that, with some brilliant exceptions, they are the least pleasing compositions in French literature.

Among these exceptions, the funeral orations of Bossuet hold confessedly the first rank. The general style of them is worthy of him : they abound with beautiful, affecting, and sublime passages ; with short, but interesting narratives and descriptions ; and with characters, sketched by a master's hand.

One of the finest of them, is the funeral oration on the death of Henrietta-Ann, the daughter of our Charles the first, and wife of the duke of Orleans. On the 29th of June, 1670, after drinking a glass of cold water, in her apartment of St. Cloud, she was seized with a shivering, succeeded by a burning heat, which threw her into the most excruciating torments. She cried out that she was poisoned : the physicians were sent for ; when they saw her, they were struck with horror at her livid appearance, pronounced her beyond medical aid, and advised her to receive, without delay, the last sacraments of the church. The princess heard them pronounce her fate with firmness : and recollecting the manner,

in which Bossuet had attended her mother, the queen dowager of England, she desired that an instant should not be lost in sending for him.—Three couriers were successively dispatched to him; and he arrived between eleven and twelve at night, at St. Cloud.

In the interval, she suffered the most dreadful pains, and, her immediate dissolution being apprehended, she made a general confession of her sins to the abbé Feuillet, a person generally esteemed, but of a harsh character. When her confession was finished, her attendants were called in: the whole scene was afflicting and horrible.

The account, which her confessor gives of his own conduct, makes us, perhaps unreasonably, blame his merciless austerity. Her lamentable shrieks he treated as acts of rebellion against the divine will, and told her, that her sins were not punished as they deserved. In the midst of her convulsions, she received his reproofs with mildness, but often inquired of madame de la Fayette, who was at her bed-side, if Bossuet were not yet come. before he came, she received extreme unction from the abbé Feuillet.—Having exclaimed in an agony of pain, “Will these torments never end?”—“Don’t forget yourself in this manner,” said the merciless abbé, “you ought to be better disposed for suffering; but I must tell you, that your torments *will* soon end.”

At length, Bossuet arrived:—As soon as the

princess saw him, she made him promise not to quit her, till she breathed her last,—He knelt down, dissolved in tears, leaning on her bed, and holding a crucifix in his hand. With a tremulous voice, often interrupted by his own feelings, he invited her to join him, as far as her sufferings allowed, in the reflections, prayers, and acts of contrition, faith, hope, and charity, which he should address to God for her, and in her name. He was exceedingly moved, and every person present sympathized in the scene. Nothing could exceed the tender and affecting sentiments of devotion and piety, which Bossuet suggested to her; he finally subdued by them, in a great measure, her sense of the cruel sufferings, which she endured.—The princess heard him with mild and composed constancy; if he stopt for a moment, she gently entreated him to continue, assuring him, that his words were of inestimable value to her. He then read over to her, the recommendation of the soul in the liturgy, explained it to her; made her gently repeat with him its soothing prayers, and softly instilled into her the sentiments which they are intended to convey; filled her soul with faith, with compunction, with calm, with resignation, and above all, with divine love for Him, into whose hands she was so soon to yield her soul.—She herself, at last, felt a consciousness of her serene triumph over pain,—“O my God!” she exclaimed, “why did I not

“ always adhere to thee !”—She recollected that the crucifix, which Bossuet had in his hands, was the same, which he had given to her mother, the queen dowager of England, to hold in her agony. She took it from him, and kept it in her hands, till she breathed her last.

An hour before she died, she turned to madame de la Fayette, and, in the English language, which Bossuet did not understand, desired her to observe, that, “ full of gratitude for the spiritual assistance, “ which she had received from Bossuet, she requested that, after her decease, a particular “ emerald ring, set in diamonds of great price, “ might be presented to him.”—Her torments continued to the last, but her patience remained ; she persisted to listen to the exhortations, to repeat the prayers, and make the humble and fervent offering of herself to the divine will, which Bossuet suggested to her. Those, who heard them, never forgot them ; the abbé Feuillet declared he never heard any thing so completely fine.

At three, in the morning, the princess died. The particulars of her death were immediately related by madame de la Fayette, to Lewis the fourteenth. He sent for Bossuet, heard them again from him, and then, with his own hand, put the emerald ring mentioned by the princess, on the prelate’s finger, and desired him to wear it for the rest of his life, in remembrance of her.—He added,

that he himself could not better show his regard for the memory of his sister-in-law, than by desiring Bossuet to pronounce her funeral oration.

Every thing we know of Bossuet, leads us to think that he had a very feeling heart; it certainly is discernible in every line of his funeral oration on the princess. He chose for his text the verse of Ecclesiastes, (i. 2.), so suitable to the occasion, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!”—Having pronounced these words, he remained for some time in silence, evidently overpowered by his feelings. “It was to be my lot,” he then exclaimed, “to perform this melancholy duty to the memory of this illustrious princess! She, whom I had observed so attentive while I performed the same duty to her royal mother, was herself so soon to become the theme of a similar discourse!—And my voice was so soon to be exerted in discharging the like melancholy duty to her. O vanity! O nothing! O mortals! ever ignorant of what awaits you!—But a month ago, would she have thought it! You, who then beheld her drowned in tears for her mother’s loss, would you have thought it! Would you have thought, that you were so soon to meet again to bewail her own fate! Oh! vanity of vanities! all is vanity! These are the only words! the only reflection, which, in such an event, my sorrow leaves me!”

After this eloquent exordium, Bossuet pursues his dismal theme. He describes, in strains, always

eloquent, but always mournful, the short, but brilliant career of the princess ;—so highly placed, so greatly gifted, so widely admired, and so generally loved ! The idol of the world ! The pride of her august family ! The delight of all, who approached her !—“ Yet, what,” he exclaimed, “ is all this, “ which we, so much below it, so greatly admire ! “ While we tremble in the view of the great, God “ smites them, that they may serve as warnings to “ us. Yes ! so little does he consider these great “ ones, that he makes them often serve as mere “ materials for our instruction !—We have always “ sufficient reason to be convinced of our nothing- “ ness ; but if, to wean our hearts from the fascina- “ tion of the world, the wonderful and astonishing “ is necessary, what we now behold is sufficiently “ terrible.—O night of woe ! O night of horror ! “ When, like a peal of thunder, the dreadful cry “ bursts on us, Henrietta is dying !—Henrietta is “ dead ! Nothing could be heard but cries, nothing “ was discernible but grief, despair, and the image “ of death !”—The writers of the time mention, that, when Bossuet pronounced these words, the whole audience arose from their seats ; that terror was visible in every countenance, and that, for some moments, Bossuet himself was unable to proceed.

Some of the other funeral orations of Bossuet contain passages equally fine. What an English reader will principally admire in them, are the

portraits, which they contain of several distinguished personages of that time. In his funeral oration on Henrietta-Maria, the widow of our Charles the first, and the mother of the princess, who was the subject of the discourse, which we have just mentioned, Bossuet gives the following description of Cromwell: “ In those days, a man arose, of
“ unfathomable depth of thought; as subtle a
“ hypocrite, as he was a consummate politician.
“ Equally impenetrable, in peace and war, he left
“ nothing to Fortune, which, by wisdom or foresight, he could keep from her power; at the same
“ time that he was so well prepared, as never to let
“ slip any opportunity, of which he could avail
“ himself to his advantage. In a word,—one of
“ those active and audacious spirits, who seem born
“ for the disturbance of the world. What do not
“ such men achieve, when it pleases the Almighty
“ to make them the instruments of his wrath!”

In his funeral oration on the chancellor Le Tellier, Bossuet gives the following admirable portrait of the celebrated cardinal de Retz:—

“ A man so faithful to individuals, so terrible to
“ the state: of so lofty a character, that it was
“ impossible to esteem, to fear, to love, or to hate
“ him, in moderation. Firm in himself, he shook
“ the universe, and obtained a dignity, which he
“ afterwards wished to resign, as unworthy of what
“ it had cost him; as an object beneath his mighty
“ mind. In the end, he was sensible of his errors,

“ and of the vanity of human greatness. But,
“ while he was in search for what he was thus after-
“ wards to despise, he shook every thing by his
“ secret and powerful means:—even in the uni-
“ versal overthrow of all around him, he still
“ seemed to suffice for his own support ; and his
“ disappointed and intrepid aspect still breathed
“ defiance on his successful adversary.”

In his funeral oration on the prince of Condé, Bossuet thus contrasts the prince and the marechal de Turenne : “ It was a sublime spectacle to behold,
“ at the same time, and, on the same fields of war,
“ two men, whom the universal voice of Europe
“ equalled to the greatest generals of past ages,
“ sometimes united, sometimes commanding dif-
“ ferent bodies, and, sometimes opposed to each
“ other ; possessed of virtues, at once so equal,
“ and of so different a character. One seemed to
“ act from deep reflection, the other from a sudden
“ illumination of mind ; the latter was most fiery,
“ but had nothing of rashness ; the former seemed
“ cold, but was never slow ; and, while he ap-
“ peared at a loss, was quietly determined on the
“ boldest and most successful enterprizes. As
“ soon as he began to act, something extraordi-
“ nary was expected from him, and he advanced,
“ in a kind of regular succession, from prodigy
“ to prodigy, till the very hour which termi-
“ nated his conquests and his life. The first
“ battle of the other placed him on a level with the

“ greatest generals. One, by vigorous and incessant efforts, fixed the admiration of the world, and silenced envy; the other, on his first appearance, threw out a lustre which filled the universe with his ascending glory, and envy dared not attack him. In fine,—one, by the depth of his genius and the infinite resources of his mighty energies, was raised above danger, and even turned to his advantage the fickleness of fortune; the other, by his illustrious birth, the lofty conceptions of his mind, and a kind of divine instinct, the secret of which was kept from man, seemed born to bend fortune to his will, and enchain the fates.”

The whole discourse abounds with the sublime, the beautiful, and the pathetic: it is generally considered to be the master-piece of Bossuet, in this branch of eloquence: but, by his own ingenuous confession, it was surpassed by the discourse which Bourdaloue pronounced on the same occasion.

Through life, the prince of Condé showed great external reverence for religion; but his youth was dissolute; during many years he was untrue to his king and country, and, for some time, commanded against them, the armies of Spain, whom France then considered, her natural and inveterate enemy. But the twenty last years of his life were religious and exemplary, and his death, edifying. On the criminal part of his life, Bossuet employed only

three lines, Bourdaloue nobly plunged into it. The prince's long profligacy, his neglect of religion, and his rebellion against his king, Bourdaloue held up to his audience, in their true colours, and dilated on them, through all the second part of his discourse. At the same time, he showed, that in the midst of his errors and his crimes, the prince preserved much of what was really great and good : and thus, while he descanted, in the very strongest terms, on the follies, the vanities, and the crimes of his hero, he made the audience lose sight of them, in the blaze of glory, with which, in the midst of all his crimination of the prince, he took care to radiate him. When, after he had amply descanted on this part of the subject, Bourdaloue described the prince, on the approach of age, sitting down to the study of religion, making his peace with his God and his king, and atoning by the retirement and regularity of the twenty last years of his life, for the errors and wanderings of his youth, and showed how honourable it was to the prince to be so converted to religious duty, and how honourable it was to religion, to have such a convert, he filled the audience with veneration for the illustrious subject of his discourse, and impressed on them, the most salutary truths. Bossuet was so struck with the noble candour and simplicity, with which Bourdaloue opened this part of his discourse, that he turned to the prelates near him, and cried out loudly enough to be generally

heard, “Voilà, notre maître à tous”—“Behold the master of us all!”

Yet, it may be questioned, whether this celebrated oration of Bourdaloue contains quite so fine a passage as that, with which Bossuet concludes the oration pronounced by him, on the same occasion. A few minutes before the prince of Condé expired, his confessor exhorted him to repeat with him the prayer of David, “O God! create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within my bowels.”—The prince seemed lost in thought; his whole attention appeared to be fixed by some great object. Then, raising himself on his bed, and turning to the persons present, he said, “I never doubted of the mysteries of religion,—whatever may have been asserted to the contrary.—Now I doubt of them less than ever.—How these truths now display themselves! How they now unfold themselves to me!” Then, lifting his eyes to heaven, he repeated, in Latin, several times, the words of the apostle, (1 Cor. xiii. 12.), “Facie ad faciem, —Face to face;” and with those words on his lips, expired.

Beautifully alluding to this interesting scene, Bossuet thus concludes his funeral oration on the prince: “For me, O prince! O worthy theme of our praise and regrets! In my memory, your image will ever live! Not however with that air of heroic ardour, which presaged your victories! —I desire to behold, about you, nothing which

“ death effaces. In your image, as I wish to be-
“ hold it, I shall see that, which is immortal. I
“ shall behold you, as you were seen in your last
“ moments, when, full of faith and hope, you were
“ under the powerful hand of God ; and his glory
“ seemed to open on you. There I shall behold
“ you infinitely more triumphant than you were at
“ Friedberg or Rocroy !—Transported with the
“ view, I shall pronounce the beautiful words of
“ the apostle, (1 John. v. 4.)—‘ The victory which
“ conquers this world, is our faith.’ May this be
“ your victory ! May you enjoy it eternally ! May
“ the eternal sacrifice, which is now offered for you,
“ give you the immediate enjoyment of it !—Ac-
“ cept, O prince ! the last effort of a voice which
“ was known to you. Yes, you shall close these
“ discourses. Instead of bewailing the deaths of
“ others, I shall henceforth endeavour, in imitation
“ of your example, to sanctify my own end. Happy !
“ if taking warning from these gray hairs, of the
“ account, which I must soon render to God, I
“ shall dedicate to the flock, which he has com-
“ mitted to my charge, the remains of a voice,
“ which begins to fail me, of an ardour, that must
“ soon cease to warm.”—This is the true sublime ;
the sublime of nature, the sublime of taste, and,
what crowns it all, the sublime of religion.

CHAP. XIV.

The Sermons of Bossuet.

THE Sermons of Bossuet place him incontestibly, in the first line of preachers; and even leave it open to argument, whether he be not the first in that line. Bourdaloue and Massillon alone can dispute his preeminence. Nothing in the sermons of either equals, in splendor or sublimity, a multitude of passages, which may be produced from the sermons of Bossuet; and he has little of Massillon's too frequent monotony, or of the cold dialectic, which occasionally retards the beautiful march of Bourdaloue. On the other hand, Bossuet has not the continued elegance and grace of Massillon; and an advocate of Bourdaloue might contend, that if Bourdaloue appear to yield to Bossuet in sublimity, it is only because the sublimity of Bourdaloue is more familiar, and therefore less imposing.

It seems to be admitted, that the sermons of Massillon, the tragedies of Euripides and Racine, and the Georgics of Virgil, are the most perfect of human compositions. Those, therefore, who read sermons, merely for their literary merit, will generally prefer the sermons of Massillon to those of Bourdaloue and Bossuet. On the other hand, the profound theology of the sermons of Bossuet, and the countless passages in them of true sublimity,

and exquisite pathos, will lead many to give him a decided preference over both his rivals. But those, who read sermons for instruction, and whose chief object, in the perusal of them, is to be excited to virtue, or confirmed in her paths, will generally consider Bourdaloue as the first of preachers, and every time they peruse him, it will be with new delight. No sermons possess, in so great a degree, the indiscribable charm of simplicity; and no composition, sacred or profane, contains any thing, which, in grace or effect, exceeds that insensible rise from mere instruction into eloquence, of which Bourdaloue scarcely has a sermon that does not furnish more than one example.—To these must be added, his inestimable talent of conversing with his hearers.—“ Was Magdalen,” he says in his panegyric of her, “ better acquainted with Jesus Christ, “ than we are? On the contrary, the mysteries “ and doctrines of Christianity, in which we have “ been instructed, have discovered to us, wonders, “ that were hidden from her eyes. Why, there- “ fore, should we make a longer delay? Without “ going farther, why, before we quit this church, “ before we stir from this very altar, where Jesus “ Christ himself is present,—(not indeed as a “ guest, which he was at the house of the Pharisee, “ but, as our food and nourishment, as a victim “ immolated for us, as our priest, as our pastor),— “ why should we not now give ourselves up to him? “ —Let us, for once, completely do, what we have,

“ so often, proposed to do ;—Let us say to him,
“ No ! O Lord ! It shall not be in a year’s time ;
“ at the end of a month ; it shall be to-day. It is
“ wrong for me to temporize with you.—It shall
“ not be, when I have finished this or that business ;
“ for it is unjust that the concerns of the world
“ should make me postpone the concerns of God
“ to them : It shall not be, when age comes upon
“ me, for yours, O God ! is every age : and it
“ would be a sensible insult to you that I should
“ reserve for you, the last years, the refuse of my
“ life.—It is now, O God !—I AM thine ; and I
“ will be always thine. Receive the protestation I
“ make to thee, and strengthen the resolution
“ which I form in thy sight.” Can simplicity, can
instruction, can eloquence go beyond this passage ?

To Bourdaloue, other merits must be added, particularly the perfection of his style. Always plain, always unambitious, he appears to strike, by what he says, and not by the manner of his saying it. Upon the whole, the public opinion, that, after reading Bourdaloue, we shall not think Bossuet the first preacher of the French nation, seems to be well founded.

Few sermons of Bossuet were published before the Benedictine edition of his works made its appearance. They fill three volumes of that edition ; but many sketches and extracts of sermons are inserted in them, which, in that form, at least, should not have been presented to the public.

The following passage is both beautiful and sublime : “ Human life resembles a road, which ends
“ in a frightful precipice. We are told of this, at
“ the first step we take : but our destiny is fixed ;
“ we must proceed. Go on ! Go on ! An invin-
“ cible power, an irresistible force impels us for-
“ ward ; and we must continually advance to the
“ precipice. A thousand crosses, a thousand pains,
“ fatigues and disturbances, vex us on the road.—
“ If we could but avoid the terrible precipice ! No !
“ Go on ! You must run on ; such is the rapid
“ flight of years. Still, on the way, we occasion-
“ ally meet wish some objects that divert us, a
“ flowing stream, a passing flower : we are amused
“ by them, and we wish to stop. Go on ! Go on !
“ We see that every thing around us falls, a fright-
“ ful crash ! an inevitable ruin ! Still, here and
“ there, we pluck some flowers, which fade in our
“ hands ; some fruits, which vanish, while we taste
“ them, which, however comfort us, for the mo-
“ ment. But, all is enchantment and illusion :
“ we are still hurried on to the frightful gulph.
“ By degrees, every thing begins to fade ; the
“ gardens seem less fair, the flowers less lively ;
“ the colours less fresh ; the meadows less gay ;
“ the waters less bright ; every thing decays, every
“ thing falls away.—At length the spectre of death
“ rises in view !—We begin to be sensible of our
“ near approach to the fatal gulph !—We touch
“ its brink :—One step more !—and !—Horror

“ now seizes our senses : the head turns, the eyes
“ wander ! We must go on !!! Oh that we might
“ return ! But there are no means of returning ;
“ all is fallen ! All is vanished and gone ! ”

It is impossible to deny the force or beauty of this passage : The following, perhaps, is in a finer manner : “ the Discourses of St Paul,” says Bossuet, “ far from flowing with the agreeable softness,
“ and tempered equality, which we admire in the
“ orators of Greece and Rome, appear unequal,
“ and without connection, to those, who have not
“ sufficiently penetrated into them. The polished
“ taste and delicate ear of the people of the world,
“ are offended with the hardness of his irregular
“ style. But, my brethren ! don’t let us be ashamed
“ of St. Paul ! the language of the apostle is simple, but all his thoughts are divine. If he be
“ ignorant of rhetoric, and despise philosophy,
“ Jesus Christ stands to him, in the stead of all.
“ The name of Christ, which he has always in his
“ mouth, the mysteries of the Gospel, which he
“ so divinely announces, make him omnipotent in
“ his simplicity. Yes, he—this man, so ignorant
“ of the art of fine speaking, will go with his
“ homely language, and his foreign phrase, into
“ Greece, the mother of philosophers and orators ;
“ and, in spite of the whole world’s resistance, will
“ establish in her more churches, than Plato, with
“ all his divine eloquence, had scholars.—He will
“ preach Christ, in Athens, and the most learned

“ of the senators will pass over from the Areopagus
“ to the school of this barbarian. He will pursue
“ his triumph, and, in the very presence of her
“ proconsul, will lay the fasces of Rome prostrate
“ at the feet of Christ; and every judge before
“ whose tribunal he is cited, will tremble. Rome
“ herself shall hear his voice, and the day will
“ come, when this city, this mistress of the world,
“ will esteem herself more honoured by a letter,
“ addressed, by him to her citizens, than by all the
“ harangues which she heard from her Cicero.—
“ A power, more than natural, is mixed in the
“ divine simplicity of his words, and gives them a
“ force, which does not, perhaps, flatter the taste,
“ but goes directly to the heart. Like a great
“ river, which preserves in the plains, through
“ which it flows, the impetuous force, which it re-
“ ceived in the mountains, whence it derived its
“ source, the virtue, which St. Paul’s Epistles con-
“ tain, preserves, even in the simplicity of his style,
“ all the vigour which it brought from heaven, its
“ divine original.”

The following is a more exact specimen of Bossuet’s general manner :

“ I can scarcely listen to the idle objections,
“ which worldly wisdom makes to us, on the false
“ supposition, that God ought to have manifested
“ himself to the world, with a splendor and a train,
“ that should be thought worthy of his majesty.
“ Miserably does opinion deceive us, if we think

“ that the splendor of this world contains any thing
“ worthy of God, who himself possesses sovereign
“ greatness. Shall *I* mention what strikes *me*, in
“ the Babe of Bethlehem, as great and admirable,
“ and truly worthy of a God, descending from
“ heaven, and conversing with man. From on
“ high, he saw that man was touched by nothing,
“ but sensual pleasure and external pomp. In his
“ wisdom, he remembered, that he had created
“ man for much more solid happiness ; and, being
“ resolved to show, as much by his own example
“ as his precepts, the folly of these notions, and his
“ contempt of what this world admires, he chose
“ for his lot, what the world most despises. He
“ was pleased therefore to be born in a wretched
“ stable : but that stable becomes, as it were, a
“ triumphal car, after which he drags the van-
“ quished world. There, all that the world has
“ of ignominy, is conquered ; all its terrors are
“ treated with contempt, all its pleasures are
“ spurned, all its torments are braved, the triumph
“ of Christ over them is complete ; nothing is left
“ undone, nothing left unfinished : and it appears
“ to me, that, in the midst of this glorious triumph,
“ he turns to us his animating countenance, and
“ loudly exclaims to us, ‘ Take courage ! I have
“ vanquished the world ! By the lowliness of my
“ birth, by the obscurity of my life, by the cruelty
“ and ignominy of my death, I have triumphed
“ over all that men admire, all they esteem, all

“ they fear. This is the sign, by which you should
 “ know me !”—Yes, O my God ! by this sign *I*
 “ do know thee ! Thou art my Saviour and my
 “ God !”

With passages of beauty equal to any transcribed in these pages, the sermons of Bossuet abound.

Their general merit is a subject of a particular Dissertation of the cardinal Maury ; and fills many a page of his *Essai sur l'Eloquence de la Chaire*. The first edition of that work was published, above 30 years ago, without the author's permission. The last edition of it, is of the year 1810, and is intitled “ *Essai sur l'Eloquence de la Chaire ; Panegyriques, Eloges, et Discours, par son Eminence Monseigneur le Cardinal Maury, Arch-Eveque de Montefiascone et de Corneto, Membre de l'Institut Imperial, &c.*” It abounds with curious and useful information and judicious criticism. But an Englishman, (however he may endure what his eminence says of the superiority of the French over the English in pulpit eloquence), must smile at the following exclamation, which the cardinal archbishop addresses to the English nation, on the general merits of their oratory. “ Illustrious Insularies ! I try to discover an orator, “ a real orator, among your sacred ministers, your “ writers, your members of parliament of the high- “ est celebrity : Be it said, without offence to your “ glory, I find no one, among you, worthy of that “ name.” The intrepidity of this address, is the

more striking, as, by the cardinal archbishop's own confession, he is wholly ignorant of the English language.

It remains to give some account of Bossuet's method of preparing his sermons. All his funeral orations, and some of his sermons, were composed by him with extreme care ; yet in those, he trusted something to the feelings of the moment : and, so great was his opinion of the necessity of attending to these, that, even in the sermons, which he prepared with most precision, he inserted many duplicates of sentences, of phrases and of words, leaving the choice of them to his actual feelings at the instant of delivery. Of his other sermons, he sometimes composed only the skeleton. Sometimes he only committed to paper, particular sentences of them ; and sometimes he committed nothing of them to paper : but, unless there was an absolute necessity, he never preached, without much serious preparation, and without arranging, with a great degree of minuteness, the general disposition of his discourse, in respect both to its principal and its subordinate parts. A considerable number of his sermons have been preserved ; but many are lost ; and among those, his panegyrics of St. Augustine and St. Ignatius are particularly regretted. His appearance in the pulpit was imposing, but graceful, his voice was loud and clear, but too shrill, his action was both vehement and dignified ; his memory never failed him.

CHAP. XV.

The Biblical Works of Bossuet.

THE early and continued attachment of Bossuet to the sacred writings, has been mentioned.—He formed a society of persons distinguished for their learning, among whom were Fenelon and Fleury, who met regularly at his apartment at St. Germain, for the purpose of reading together, the whole of the Old and New Testament, and framing a short, continued commentary on them. The Bible of Vitré was the edition, used at these conferences. The original text was read, the ancient and modern versions, translations and commentaries were consulted. The discussion was open to all: it was finally summed up by Bossuet, and the result committed to writing, in the shortest possible terms, by Fleury. The conferences lasted many years; and produced a continued series of notes on the Pentateuch, Job, the Psalms, the Sapiential books, and the Prophets. To each of them, Bossuet prefixed a preface and general observations. They have never been printed; the manuscript of them has been lost, and the loss of it has not been accounted for. But some short notes of Bossuet on the Psalms and some of the Sapiential books have been printed. A preface, composed by him, and

which he probably intended for the greater work, is prefixed to the Psalms, and is much admired.

Bossuet kept an open table for such of the persons who assisted at the conferences, as pleased to dine with him. The abbé de Longuerue, (*Longueruana*, p. 70), accuses him of giving them very bad dinners.

Bossuet's *Explanation of the Apocalypse*, as a refutation of Jurieu's distortions of it, against the church of Rome, is entitled to the gratitude of every roman-catholic.

CHAP. XVI.

The other Devotional Works of Bossuet.

IT has been observed, that intense application, even to sacred literature, is often unfavourable to devotion. "I was carried away," says Huet, the learned bishop of Avranches, in his entertaining book, *de rebus ad eum pertinentibus*, "by the pleasures found in learning. The endless variety, which it affords, had so taken up my thoughts, and seized all the avenues of my mind, that I was altogether incapable of any sweet and intimate communion with God. When I withdrew into religious retirement, in order to recollect my scattered thoughts, and fix them on heavenly

“ things, I experienced a dryness and insensibility
“ of soul, by which the Holy Spirit seemed to
“ punish this excessive bent to learning.”—This was not the case with Bossuet. A considerable portion of his time was always dedicated to prayer and devotional exercises. All his writings, which admitted it, have not only a theological, but a devotional tint : all breathe a feeling spirit of piety, and discover a soul, blessed with the internal reign of God.—The most important of his spiritual works, are his *Elevations* and *Meditations*. They are evidently the work of a soul saturated with theological and pious lore ; theology predominates in them ; but they abound with beauty and instruction. They were first published, after his decease, by his nephew, the bishop of Troyes. Some doubts of their authenticity having been suggested, in the *Journal de Trevoux*, it was established beyond controversy, in a judicial process ; and an authenticated copy, literally compared with the original, were deposited among the records of the parliament of Paris.

We select, for the perusal of the reader, two passages from these works ; one for its singular beauty, the other, for its containing, in a few lines, a fair specimen of their general spirit.

In the former, (*Elevations sur la Mysteries, AA. Semaine I.*), Bossuet thus addresses the Saviour of the world, when the girdings of his childhood were first untied :—“ O amiable Infant ! Happy

“ they, who then beheld you ! who saw you, for
 “ the first time, unfold your arms, open your little
 “ hands, caress your holy mother, and the holy
 “ old man who had adopted you ; or rather, to
 “ whom you had given yourself for a son ; who
 “ saw you make your first steps ; observed your
 “ tongue first beginning to loosen, heard your first
 “ lisplings in the praise of your divine Father.
 “ Holy Infant ! in all the progress of your growth,
 “ I adore you ! Whether your infant cries call
 “ her to you, from whose breasts you received
 “ your first nourishment ;—whether you repose on
 “ her breast, and within her arms,—in all you do,
 “ I adore you. I adore you in your silence : but
 “ begin : for it is time to let us hear your voice.
 “ Who will obtain for me, to attend as I ought, to
 “ your first word ! Yes ! the grace of God is in you !
 “ O divine infant ! Teach me to imitate the inno-
 “ cence and simplicity of your infant years.”

In the second of these passages, (*Troisieme
 Meditation de la derniere Semaine*) Bossuet thus
 exclaims : “ How comes it that the number of the
 “ disciples of Jesus is so small ? That the clamours
 “ of those, who sent him to Calvary, so soon fol-
 “ lowed the hosannas of those who strewed his
 “ road with palms on his entry into Jerusalem ?
 “ That scarcely one hundred and twenty of his
 “ disciples were assembled in the upper chamber, in
 “ expectation of the descent of the Holy Ghost?—
 “ It is because the true disciples of Jesus are not

“ they, who are satisfied with admiring him, with
“ praising him, with celebrating him, who exter-
“ nally, or to a certain point, follow him.—His
“ true disciples are those, who listen to him in-
“ ternally, and every where ; who observe his
“ precepts, who deny themselves, who take his
“ cross on them, and follow him every where.”

In the following passage, (*Med. cxvii jour*) Bossuet beautifully addresses himself to a class of persons, the number of whom, even in this wicked town, as it is called, is greater, (if the writer may be allowed to speak from his own observation), than is generally thought,—humble and unpretending individuals, whose earliest and latest thought is, what the gospel teaches us should be the great end and aim of all, to increase in ourselves and others the love of God and our neighbour : who become beggars for the poor, who enter into all their wants, are unceasingly employed in religious or charitable undertakings, take on themselves the most irksome details, and unnoticed, and almost unseen, are their real support.—In the great day of retribution, nothing of this will be forgotten by him, who will then remember, even a cup of cold water, given in his name. In the mean time, they meet with nothing but coldness, repulse, opposition and contumely. “ Poor, suffering martyrs !” Bossuet exclaims, “ persist in suffering this lowly
“ martyrdom, without murmuring ; and sincerely
“ loving those, who make you suffer. This was

“ one of the distinctive marks of Jesus Christ ;
“ and you have the honour of bearing it. For
“ whom I am writing this, I know not ; I have
“ none particularly in view, but I know there are
“ many such.—Dear to them indeed should be
“ their humiliations, whatever they are, and what-
“ ever occasions them.”

The voluminous correspondence of Bossuet, with nuns, is another monument of his piety. In the midst of his vast variety of occupation, he always found time to correspond with them ; to excite their fervour, animate their devotion, sooth their anxieties and confirm their virtues. It contains not fewer than two hundred questions, put to him, by the nuns, and his answers to them. Some of the questions are trifling ; many are interesting, and many strike much by their delicacy and ingenuity. The profoundest metaphysician could not propose more searching questions than those put to Bossuet by madame de Maisonfort, on the points in contest between him and Fenelon, on the disinterested love of God. Let those, who think slightly of cloistered piety, recollect, that the very pen, which wrote these letters, wrote also the Exposition of the Catholic Faith, the Variations, the Funeral Oration of the prince of Condé, and, (sublimier than all), the Introduction to Universal History.

His works contain many other particular tracts : his explanation of the twenty-first Psalm deserves particular mention.

Few of his writings do not contain passages of real grandeur and sublimity. They abound with the pathetic, the graceful, the easy, and even with the familiar : but his natural port is lofty. Even in the bits and scraps of paper, preserved by the last editors of his writings, this loftiness is discoverable.

“ O sinner ! ” he writes in one of them, (*Réflexions sur le triste état des Pecheurs*, VIII. vol. p. 573.)

“ O sinner ! who readest these lines, contemplate yourself, while your Judge contemplates you.

“ Behold, in your soul, what, at this very moment,

“ he beholds in her ; the number and grievousness

“ of your sins. Dwell on them ; God sees them

“ all. He sees your thoughts ; consider what *his*

“ thoughts are, what *his* designs may be when *he*

“ sees you. At least, consider what is near you,

“ while you read these lines. The divine justice

“ encompasses you, observes you, and writes down

“ your life. His mercy retires from you :—but

“ both his mercy and justice speak internally to

“ you ; they entreat you to consider what you may

“ be to-morrow, what you may be this very night,

“ and even what you may be in this very hour.

“ You may be dead, and judged, and condemned

“ to everlasting flames, in a few minutes. In the

“ next instant, all this may happen to you.—

“ O christian soul ! it is not I ; it is not the voice

“ of man ; it is something much more powerful,

“ much more worthy of your attention, that now

“ addresses you.—How numerous are your sins,

“ from the first day on which you began to sin !
“ But, from that time, how great has been the
“ goodness of God to you ! What day has passed,
“ in which this compassionate Father of all prodigal children has not sought you, has not
“ stretched forth his hand to you ?—Wherever you
“ turn, you can see in yourself nothing but enormous sin and frightful ingratitude. What mercy
“ do you not need ?—Go then to Calvary ! There,
“ it is true, you will be accused of having spilt your
“ Saviour’s blood ; they will show you, on the
“ redeeming rood, him, whom you have crucified !—But be not terrified ; acknowledge your
“ sin ; be sorry for it : Say to him, whom you
“ behold on the cross, O suffering, O dying God !
“ the evil you behold in me, is not a passing evil !
“ a trifling evil ! It is the death of my soul, her
“ death for time and eternity ! Have pity on me !
“ Say this with a contrite and humble heart, and
“ you will see that Mercy herself will issue from
“ the wounded side of your Redeemer, and truth
“ and justice will meet in you, and seal your
“ pardon.” The sublime pathos of this passage has not often been surpassed : in the writings of Bossuet, passages of equal greatness perpetually occur.

The most finished passages in them, however, are those, in which he blends eloquence and argument together, and overwhelms his adversary by their united power. His variations, his addresses

to the members of the reformed church ; his conferences with M. Claude, abound with passages of this nature.

They abound also in his controversial writings on quietism. In the life, which the writer of these pages has published of Fenelon, he has attempted to give a particular account of this controversy, and endeavoured to hold the scales, between the two great antagonists, with impartiality. That both of them were blamable must be admitted :—but, on the failings of such men it is painful to dwell : the best reflection, suggested by them, seems to be that, with which father Bourdaloue opens the part of his funeral oration on the prince of Condé, which turns on the failings of his hero.

“ There is not,” says that eloquent preacher,
“ a luminary in the heavens, which does not some-
“ times suffer an eclipse ; and the sun, which is
“ the most splendid of them, suffers the greatest
“ and most remarkable. Two circumstances in
“ them particularly deserve our consideration ;—
“ one, that, in these eclipses, the sun suffers no
“ substantial loss of light, and preserves its regular
“ course ; the other, that, during the time of its
“ eclipse, the universe contemplates it with most
“ interest, and watches its variations with most
“ attention.—The prince, whom we lament, had
“ his eclipses—it would be idle to attempt conceal-
“ ing them : they were as visible as his glory.
“ But, he never lost the principle of rectitude,

“ which ruled his heart. That preserved him in
“ his wanderings, and restored him to religion and
“ to loyalty, so greatly to his own honour and to
“ our good.” The faults of Fenelon and Bossuet,
in their unfortunate controversy, are entitled to the
same benign mention. The lustre of their cha-
racters attracted universal attention, and made their
errors both more observable and more observed.
But the eclipse was temporary, and the golden flood
was unimpaired. Those, who are most disposed to
be severe on their variations, should reflect on this
circumstance : on a little self-examination, they will
generally find, that, if they themselves are not
equally exposed to public censure, it is less owing
to the undeviating rectitude of their conduct, than
to the happy obscurity of their destinies.

CHAP. XVII.

*Bossuet appointed to be Preceptor of the
Dauphin.*

THE important charge, of governor of the dauphin,
was conferred by Lewis the fourteenth on the duke
of Montausier, a nobleman of cultivated mind and
austere virtue, with liberty to appoint the dauphin’s
preceptor, sub-preceptor, and subordinate attend-
ants. His choice fell, first on M. de Perigny,

president of the *chambre des comptes*. On the death of the president, the duke appointed Bossuet to fill his place. He had been recently nominated to the bishopric of Condom. His necessary attendance on the dauphin being incompatible with residence in his diocese, he resigned his bishopric ; and the king gave him the priory of Plessis-Grimoux, which produced him a yearly revenue of three hundred pounds. By that income, he modelled his establishment. His majesty afterwards gave him the abbey of St. Lucien de Beauvais, a more considerable benefice. It was observed on that occasion, that Bossuet did not increase his expense ; and that the poor only were the better for his increase of income. M. Huet, afterwards bishop of Avranches, and perhaps, at that time, the most learned man in France, was the dauphin's sub-preceptor.

The education which the dauphin received, was religious and learned. A particular account of it is given by Bossuet, in a letter, written by him to pope Innocent the eleventh. He mentions in it, with evident satisfaction, the harmony, which always subsisted between him and the duke of Montausier. It was their wish, to make the dauphin generally acquainted with ancient history, and the history of foreign nations ; that he should be a complete master of the history of his own country, and thoroughly informed of her constitution and laws. He was also instructed in classical literature, and,

ostensibly for his use, the celebrated edition of the Delphine classics was published: Huet had the direction of this edition.

It was much desired by Lewis the fourteenth, that the dauphin should be instructed in natural history and anatomy. In a conversation which he had with Bossuet, towards the end of the dauphin's education, he mentioned to him, that he himself had once wished to acquire a knowledge of the organization of the human frame, but had been frightened from it, by the repulsive nomenclature of anatomy: he expressed, however, a wish, that some tincture of this science should be given to his son. Bossuet undertook to be his instructor in it: and, in order to qualify himself for it, he frequented the lectures of Nicholas Steron, a celebrated professor of anatomy at Paris. Under his tuition, Bossuet soon acquired so much anatomical knowledge, as to compose, in about thirty-two octavo pages, a short course of anatomy, which, if we believe cardinal Maury, is, even now, considered a complete elementary treatise, and is often put into the hands of beginners. Steron was great uncle to Winslow, an anatomist of immortal name: Winslow was educated a lutheran, and converted to the roman-catholic religion by Bossuet. During the latter years of Bossuet's life, Winslow lived in his house, and, after his death, always spoke of him with affection and veneration.

But, the principal work of Bossuet, which we owe

to his education of the dauphin, is his immortal Introduction to Universal History. The first part of it contains a short abridgment of universal history, from the creation of the world to Charlemagne, so concisely expressed, that it might serve for an index to a greater work : but it scarcely contains a sentence, in which there is not some noun, or verb, that conveys an image or suggests a sentiment of the noblest kind. The third part of it, is a philosophical view of the causes of the rise and decline of empires ; it abounds with ingenious and deep observation. But, in the second part of it, the genius of Bossuet takes its highest flight. He never appears on the stretch of exertion ; he is never lost in the mazes of argumentation ; but, in a continued strain of sublime eloquence, displays the truths and proofs of the christian religion, with a grandeur of thought, a magnificence of language, and a force of evidence, which nothing can withstand. A nobler work in support of Christianity has never issued from the press. Referring to it, Voltaire, in the first edition of his *Siècle Louis Quatorze*, says, that France then abounded with elegant writers, but that Bossuet alone was eloquent. This passage continued in all the editions of Voltaire's works, till the Genevan edition of them in 1760 : in that edition it was omitted, Voltaire being perhaps unwilling to render such a tribute of praise to a prelate, who was one of the brightest ornaments of that religion, which it was the great object of

his life to destroy. Yet, in the article *Eloquence*, in his *Philosophical Dictionary*, published by him several years posterior to the Genevan edition of his works, Voltaire again does justice to Bossuet : “ I have said it,” these are his words, “ and I “ repeat it,—among all those elegant writers, “ Bossuet alone was eloquent.”

It seems proper to observe in this place, that a reader accustomed only to those elegant writers, should not be surprised, if, when he first opens the pages of Bossuet, he is insensible of their charms. Those, whose eyes have long been habituated to the elegant softness and beauty of modern gardening, are not, at the first view, sensible either of the majesty or loveliness of forest scenery.

CHAP. XVIII.

Bossuet solicits the canonization of St. Vincent of Paul.

ONE of the last public acts of Bossuet's life, was to solicit formally, at Rome, the canonization of St. Vincent of Paul. It was almost an act of gratitude, as, in early life, Bossuet had been instructed by that venerable man, in the duties of an active clergyman.

Among the many excellent institutions, for which the church of France stands indebted to

St. Vincent, his religious retreats and conferences may be particularly mentioned. Every person, properly recommended, was admitted to spend fourteen days in an hospice, founded for that purpose, by St. Vincent, at Paris. They were provided with a comfortable apartment, with candle, fire, and regular meals, without the least expense. It was understood, that an offer of a present from them, under any form, was not to be made ; and that, if it were made, it was to be refused. Nothing was required of them in return, but that they should attend the daily exercises of prayer, self-examination, and meditation, which were performed by the community, under the direction of an experienced clergyman.

The conferences, established by St. Vincent of Paul, were public discussions, chiefly of points arising in the ordinary discharge of a clergyman's functions, which were carried on, in a numerous assembly, under the direction of experienced divines. In return, for the permission of attending them, the persons, who attended them, were expected to employ themselves, while they lasted, in administering spiritual succours to prisoners, the sick and the poor.

Of each of these excellent institutions, Bossuet had availed himself. He frequently mentioned his obligation to St. Vincent, for instilling into him, in his first entry into the ecclesiastical state, a knowledge and sense of its obligations.

The annals of the world scarcely furnish an instance of such a benefactor to humanity as St. Vincent. He was the son of a day-labourer in Gascony. When about thirty years of age, he was taken prisoner at sea, and carried to Tunis, where he continued two years a slave. Having escaped into France, he entered into holy orders, and devoted himself to the service of the unhappy persons, condemned to the galleys. The reform, which he worked among them, the decent and resigned demeanor, which he produced in them, and the alleviations of their sufferings, which his charitable exertions in their favour, obtained for them, were surprising. On one occasion, a poor young man, having, for a single act of smuggling, been condemned to the galleys, for three years, complained to him, in such moving terms, of his misfortune, and of the distress to which it would reduce his wife and infant children, that St. Vincent substituted himself in his place, and worked in the galleys, during eight months, chained by the leg, to the oar. The fact was then discovered, and he was ransomed. This circumstance was juridically proved, on his canonization, and he always retained, in one of his legs, a soreness, from the chain, which he had worn. He established the Foundling Hospital at Paris; and raised, by a single speech, which he made for it, in a moment of its distress, an instant subscription of forty thousand French livres. In the war of the Fronde, several thousand German soldiers,

who had been seduced, by great promises, into the army of the Fronde, were placed in Paris and its neighbourhood ; and, the war proving unsuccessful to those, who had engaged them, were abandoned by them, and left to perish. St. Vincent stirred up such a general spirit of charity in their behalf, as enabled him to provide for the immediate subsistence of them all, and to send them back, clothed and fed, to their own country. The calamities of the same war in Champagne, Picardy, Lorraine and Artois, were terrible ; and, a year of great scarcity coming on, famine and pestilence ensued ; numbers perished for hunger, and their bodies lay unburied. Information of this scene of woe being carried to St. Vincent, he raised a subscription of twelve millions of French money, and applied it for the relief of the wretched objects. These, and a multitude of other acts of beneficence, were juridically proved, on his canonization, and Bossuet, in his letter of solicitation, dwells on them, with great eloquence. St. Vincent was canonized by Pope Clement XII, and his feast fixed for the 19th of July.—Those, who know the charities, charitable institutions, and charitable assistants of the abbé Caron, in Somers Town, will easily believe what history records of St. Vincent.

To the honour of France, it may be truly said, that instances of heroic charity were, by no means, rare in that great kingdom. To the cardinal Maury's Essay on the Eloquence of the Pulpit,

which has been so often quoted in these pages, he has added an Eloge, which he pronounced, before the French academy, of the abbé de Radonvilliers, sub-preceptor to Lewis the sixteenth and his royal brothers. He mentions in it, that, when he was collecting materials for it, he found that the abbé de Radonvilliers had a general reputation of being uncommonly charitable ; but that he could discover no particular instances of his charity, till it occurred to him to apply to the curate of the parish of St. Roche, with whom the abbé was known to have been intimate. From him, the cardinal learned that the abbé regularly gave one fourth of his ecclesiastical revenues to the poor of the places in which it arose : that, during the last thirty-three years of his life, he sent one hundred guineas monthly to the poor of the parish of St. Roche, and besides that donation, had a weekly account of charity with the curate, for uncommon objects of relief ; an application for whom, the curate declared, he had never known the abbé to deny. The abbé's own expences were limited to one fourth of his income. What fills the measure, and sanctifies the merit of his great charities, is, that they were concealed, and known to God alone, and to the very few persons who were concerned in the distribution of them.

It may be added, that, speaking generally, a French curate, in the country particularly, was the father of his poor parishioners : His zeal for their

good, and their love and respect for him, cannot be described. All the furniture of a late curé de St. Sulpice, who had the richest curacy in France, consisted of a bed, a table, and a few chairs. Cardinal Maury relates, that, when the curé de St. Roche refused to take the oath of adherence to the civil constitution of the clergy, he convened a meeting of some of the principal parishioners to verify his accounts: and that the celebrated M. Bailly, the mayor of Paris, attended the meeting. The curate produced his accounts; and it appeared by them, that the charitable subscriptions of the preceding year, all which were purely voluntary, amounted to 130,000 French livres; for every farthing of which, the curé accounted most satisfactorily. All these charities were absolutely private; and if the event, which has been mentioned, had not brought them into notice, would have remained unknown.—It is hoped, that the pleasing and edifying nature of the facts, which have been mentioned, will apologise for this digression.

CHAP. XIX.

Bossuet as Bishop; his last years, and Death.

SOON after the education of the dauphin was finished, Lewis the fourteenth nominated Bossuet to the bishopric of Meaux. He was appointed successively, Almoner to the Dauphiness,—Superior

of the college of Navarre,—Warden of the university of Sorbonne,—Counsellor of State, and first Almoner of the duchess of Burgundy. When that princess came from Bavaria into France, for her marriage, Lewis the fourteenth appointed several persons of distinction at his court, with madame de Maintenon and Bossuet at their head, to meet her. “This,” madame de Sevigné wrote to her daughter, “is a great distinction. If the dauphiness thinks all the men and women in France resemble the two, which have been sent her, she will be greatly disappointed.”

Through life, Bossuet was highly esteemed by Lewis the fourteenth, and his conduct in the monarch’s regard, showed, that he deserved his esteem. No subject ever gave better advice to his sovereign, or expressed it with greater boldness, than Bossuet. “Your majesty,” he says in one of his letters to Lewis the fourteenth “is sometimes told that the people are ever complaining, and that it is impossible to satisfy them.—Without going back very far, the present century beheld Henry the fourth, your majesty’s grandfather, whose wise and persevering endeavour to discover the proper remedies for the disorders of the state, completely succeeded, and made the people both feel and acknowledge their happiness.—Their love for him was extreme ; and, when he died, you might see in all the kingdom, and even in private families, not only horror and indignation at the tragic

“ circumstances of his death, but that desolation,
“ which children show, at the death of a father.
“ There are few among us, who have not heard
“ their fathers or grandfathers mention it, who
“ have not heard them dwell, with rapture, on the
“ goodness of this king to his people, and their
“ love for him.—Yes, Sir, you were formed to have
“ the love and respect of all your people. Be
“ satisfied with being the terror of the enemies of
“ the state, of them who do evil. Let all else
“ love you ; let them place their comfort and hope
“ in you, and receive from you the relief, which
“ they so much want. This is the most essential
“ of all your duties : pardon my dwelling so much
“ on it. The evils of the state are great, but it is
“ impossible that there should be no remedy for
“ them.—I know,—yes, I know for certain, that,
“ if your majesty should show a fixed determina-
“ tion, that the abuses of office should cease, that
“ the remedies for them should be discovered and
“ applied, that you are no longer to be trifled with,
“ and that you will not be satisfied till something
“ effectual is done, every thing will bend before
“ you ; the calamities of France will end ; your
“ enemies, whose greatest hope is in the disorder
“ of your affairs, will be disappointed. No king
“ will be your equal, in individual happiness, or
“ the glories of his reign.”

Bossuet's residence in his diocese was constant. Immediately after his consecration, he re-assumed

the function of preaching. His sermons were then in the nature of familiar discourses : full of unction and plain instruction ; and breathing a pastoral solicitude for his flock, which gained their hearts. He was particularly solicitous that the children, within his diocese, should be assiduously catechised, and thoroughly grounded in their religion. He composed for their use, three catechisms, for beginners, the instructed, and the well-instructed.— They are printed among his posthumous works ; but they have been altogether superseded by the excellent catechisms of Fleury. If it were necessary to mention the book of early instruction, the want of which, among roman-catholics, it would be most difficult to supply, the historical catechism of Fleury, would, perhaps, be the first thought of. Bossuet also composed for the general use of his diocese, a prayer-book of the usual devotions, and translated for its use several hymns of the church.

He was attentive both to the spiritual and temporal wants of the poor. He was most kind to the inferior clergy of his diocese, and drew many ecclesiastics of distinction into it. He held religious conferences with the most learned of his clergy : a Treatise on the Love of God, published among his works, resulted from them. His zeal for the conversion of the huguenots, and his dislike of compulsory methods in effecting it, have been mentioned. M. de Burigny relates, that, in the year 1685, more than 900 huguenots within the diocese of

Meaux, embraced the roman-catholic religion. Bossuet officiated, in his cathedral, on great solemnities, and frequently carried the blessed Sacrament in public processions. He did not generally hear confessions; but he undertook the spiritual direction of some, whose piety particularly attracted his notice. One of these, was a madame Corneau, an obscure woman of an exemplary life. He kept up a regular correspondence with her on subjects of piety. It is impossible to read it, without being struck with his great zeal, condescension and patience. That, and his other correspondence, fill three volumes of the Benedictine edition of his works. Some curious facts and remarks may be found in them; but the general tone of them is devotional: the fable of the world has no place in any of them.

In two long law-suits, he successfully supported the spiritual jurisdiction of the See of Meaux, against the princely abbesses of Jouarre and Faremoutiers. These were the only contests, by which the administration of his diocese was disturbed. That there was a noble simplicity in all his proceedings, that his manners were conciliating, that he confined himself within his proper sphere of duty, that he was zealous for the glory of God, officious to serve his friends, charitable to the poor, and benevolent to all, is proclaimed by the concurrent testimony of all his contemporaries. He enjoyed an uniform state of good health, till the

last year of his life. He was then afflicted with the stone.

It appears, (see *M. de Burigny, Vie de Bossuet*) that, at once to beguile and sanctify his sufferings in this cruel disorder, Bossuet employed his intervals of ease, in the composition of a commentary on the psalm, numbered 21, in the Vulgate, and 22, in the English Liturgy. That psalm has always been considered to be a prophetic description, remarkably distinct and clear, of the bodily and mental sufferings of Christ on the cross, of the resurrection of Christ, and of his establishment of his church. It was the aim of Bossuet, by the frequent meditation of the subject of this psalm, to raise himself to an imitation of the great model of patience, which it describes. It appears to have been a favourite theme of Bossuet: he has left us four sermons upon it. In each of them, his eloquence takes its highest flight;—and, each of them abounds with those terrible beauties, which Longinus so greatly admires in the Grecian orator, and with that strong pathos, which equally subdues and satisfies reason.

The commentary, of which we are now speaking, is confined to the sufferings of Christ, from the commencement of his agony. Bossuet describes the agony of a dying person, to be that interval of time, in which the soul, being separated from all the other parts of the human frame, and having retreated to the heart, remains in her, till the

moment of death. He says, that it was the sacred will of Jesus Christ, that his human nature should suffer this agony, and therefore experience the last struggle of nature. He felt it, says Bossuet, in all its bitterness, never ignorant of the love, which his heavenly Father bore to him, but receiving no comfort from it that assuaged his sufferings. Then, says Bossuet, the wrath of the Divine Father burst on the devoted Son. The tortures of his body, the anguish of his mind, were then at the highest. —He saw himself covered with sin, the object of his Father's anger, forsaken and rejected by him. The astonishment, the horror, the dismay of his soul were infinite. Bossuet even seems to think, (*Sur l'Agonie de Jesus Christ*, VIII. vol. *Ben. ed.* p. 529), that, in this terrific hour, the enemy of man was permitted to assail the Son of God with the most violent temptations. “In whatever manner,” adds Bossuet, in the second of the four sermons we have mentioned, “the Son of God “could suffer this complicated woe, whether it was “that his divinity retired, as it were, into itself; “or only permitted its sacred presence to be felt “in a particular part of his soul; or whatever “other cause produced this miraculous effect, certain it is that the sufferings of Christ must have “been incomprehensibly great, when he could cry “out, that he was rejected by his Father.”

This cry, says Bossuet, the royal prophet heard; he beheld the despised, the rejected One, in his

sufferings ; and, in a manner very common among the prophetic writers, makes him, centuries before the wonder of mercy took place, himself describe them, in the psalm we have mentioned. He asks of God, why he had forsaken him ; he tells him, that by day and night he calls on him for relief : that his forefathers had never prayed to him in vain. “ But thou,” he says, “ who didst always hear their prayers, art deaf to mine. I am a worm, “ not a man, the reproach and contempt of the “ people. All that see me, laugh me to scorn ; “ they shoot up the lip, they shake their head at “ me, saying,—He trusted in the Lord, that he “ would deliver him !—I am poured out as water, “ and all my bones are disjoined ; my strength is “ dried up ; my tongue has cleaved to my jaws : “ thou hast brought me into the dust. Dogs have “ encompassed me ; the wicked have enclosed me ; “ they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can “ count my bones. They look and stare upon me : “ they divide my garments among them, they cast “ lots for my vesture.” Bossuet here brings before the reader, the account, given by the Evangelists, of our Saviour’s sufferings on the cross ; and then shows, that the psalm is as historical as it is prophetic.—If a stranger to its prophetic nature should peruse it, would he not, from the exactness of its prophetic representation of the sufferings of the Son of God, consider it as a description of them, written at a time subsequent to the accounts

given of them by the sacred penmen, and taken from them ?

“ At this place,” says Bossuet, “ the first part of the psalm concludes. The despised, the rejected One, is nailed to the cross ; his agony is at its height ; his suffering humanity appears to have no resource.”

Then suddenly it changes into an hymn of triumph.—The despised, the rejected One, calls once more on God to save him ;—and is *now* heard. “ I will announce thy name,” he cries, “ to my brethren ; in the midst of them, I will praise thee.” He calls on Israel to praise the Lord ; he foretells that his own praise, and the mercies of his Father to him, shall be the theme of the greater church ; he foretels the spiritual banquet, which shall be prepared in it ; that the extremities of the world, all the families of the nations, shall worship the true God, and that he shall eternally reign over them.

“ But,” says Bossuet, “ *who* is to announce the name of God to his brethren ? Is it he, whose hands and feet have been pierced ? who has been stript of his clothes ? who is nailed to this cross ? whose clothes have been divided among the soldiers ?—In a word, is it the despised, the rejected One, who has been condemned and executed, and agonized on the cross ?—How is *he* to announce the wonders of God to his brethren ?”—To do it, he must be raised from the dead. “ Here


“ then,” says Bossuet, “ his resurrection bursts
“ on us, as a flood of light ; his resurrection is
“ as clearly predicted as his death.”

Such is Bossuet’s view of this prophetic psalm : an introduction is prefixed to his commentary upon it ; two versions of it are given ; the various readings of the text are discussed ; the whole commentary abounds with learning and eloquence, and has all the vigour of his earliest compositions. It affords a pleasing instance of the triumph of genius and piety, over age, over pain, and the near approach of death.

In this manner Bossuet employed his latter days.—We have now reached the term of our biography : it remains only to add, that he died on the 12th of April 1704, in the 76th year of his age, in the arms of M. Hébert, who had been curate of Versailles, and had then recently been appointed to the See of Agen.

Soon after the decease of Bossuet, a collection of his printed works was published in twelve volumes quarto. Three volumes quarto of his posthumous works afterwards made their appearance. To them must be added, the *Defensio Cleri Gallicani*, which has been mentioned.—A complete edition of his works was begun by the Benedictine monks, of the congregation of St. Maur, in 1772 ; twelve volumes of it only have come into the writer’s possession : he understands that eight others have been printed.

“ Bossuet,” says the celebrated M. de la Bruyère,
“ overwhelms us by the number and greatness of
“ his talents. Orator, historian, theologian, and
“ philosopher ; singularly eloquent as a preacher,
“ as a writer, and in familiar discourse ; a defender
“ of religion, a light of the church.—Let us speak,
“ by anticipation, the language of posterity, and
“ call him a father of the church !—What may we
“ not say of him ? Can we mention a virtue, which
“ he had not ?”



THE
L I F E
OF
HENRI-MARIE DE BOUDON,
ARCHDEACON OF EVREUX
IN NORMANDY.

T H E
L I F E
O F
HENRI-MARIE DE BOUDON.

THE sketches of the Lives of BOSSUET and FENELON, which have been lately laid before the public, have presented to the reader, a view of two of the brightest ornaments of the church of France. Both of them were eminent for the purity of their morals, their piety, their exemplary discharge of pastoral duty, their learning and their eloquence. But, while both of them made the principles of the gospel the rule of their conduct, both of them were attentive to the forms and decencies of polished life ; and thus far, both of them, it may be said, kept terms with the world.—With the world, the venerable man, whose life is the subject of the present pages, kept no terms :—GOD ALONE was the sole end and aim of his life.

He was born on the fourteenth day of January sixteen hundred and twenty-four, of noble parents.

Three queens, Mary of Medicis, the widow of Henry the fourth, Ann of Austria, the wife of Lewis the thirteenth, and Henrietta-Maria, the daughter of the first, and the sister of the second of these princes, and, afterwards the wife of our Charles the first, were present at his baptism. The last of them was his god-mother, and, out of respect to her, he received the christian name of Henry-Mary. His mother, immediately upon his birth, placed him under the protection of the Virgin Mary ; and, as soon as he was capable of bearing the journey, took him to Liesse, a town in Normandy, and there, in a chapel, dedicated to the holy Virgin, placed him under her protection. When Boudon grew up, this was a subject of great joy to him : “ Oh most amiable and most merciful mother !” he used to exclaim, “ from my earliest years thou has been a mother to me. Were all hearts in the world in my power, they should be dedicated to thy Son. They should breathe his perfect love, and incessantly sound his praises !” At three years of age he could read ; and even then, rose always at an early hour to sing the divine office. When he was in his ninth year, he made his first communion. He prepared himself for it, by much prayer, by many acts of charity, and by great austerity ; for, even at that age, holy austerity was familiar to him. The Almighty received his humble preparation, and bestowed on him an abundance of those heavenly favours which exceed all worldly

joy. From that time, he dedicated himself to God alone : and, soon after, made a vow of perpetual chastity.

He was then placed under the Jesuits at Rouen. There, he prosecuted his studies with exemplary diligence, and made great proficiency in them. He was beloved both by his masters and school-fellows. Insensibly he formed the latter, and several other children, into bands, dedicated to practices of devotion and charity. He frequently spoke to them on pious subjects ; on the dignity of their souls ; on the goodness of Jesus Christ, who became poor for the love of them, and died on the cross to redeem them ; on the habitual disposition, in which they ought to be, of preferring death, in its most hideous form, to the slightest sin. He was particularly attentive to such of the children as were poor : he inculcated to them, that, if they sanctified their humble lot by probity and devotion, they would cease to be poor, as they would become the beloved children of God, and co-heirs of his eternal kingdom. His words had a wonderful effect on their little minds. One of them, a beggar in rags, while the jesuits were making a collection at Rouen, for building a church, offered a small piece of money to the rector, as a mite, towards the pious work. The rector, observing the poverty of the child's appearance, declined the present. The child as rich in faith as poor in fortune, looked steadily at the rector, and said to him ;—" Father, you are under

“ a mistake ! I am not poor ! I am a christian, and
“ therefore a child of a great King, and heir of a
“ great kingdom. God is my father ; and if I
“ truly love and serve him, his kingdom is mine
“ by inheritance.” — Boudon incessantly recommended the poor children to those who were rich :
“ They are,” he used to say, “ your brethren.
“ Deny yourselves what you can to give it to them ;
“ and, when you give it, return thanks to God,
“ that, in permitting you to serve them, he does
“ you the honour of permitting you to serve him.
“ Above all things, never give them a look, or a
“ word, that is harsh. Every poor man is an image
“ of Christ : What a crime must it be to treat the
“ image of God—to treat one whom he loves, with
“ disrespect !” By degrees the association was a matter of general wonder and edification in the city of Rouen. Every morning at four o’clock the members of it met at the church of the jesuits, made their morning prayer and meditation, and then heard mass. In the evening they again assembled to pray ; and, in the intermediate time, employed themselves in their proper occupations. On Sundays and festivals, they attended the whole of the divine service in the church : and, in the evening assembled in some sequestered spot in the country, and made it resound with their holy hymns. But in the mean time they lost no opportunity of serving the poor. They begged alms for them, procured medicines for such of them as were sick,

prevailed on physicians and surgeons to attend them, dressed their wounds, and obtained food and raiment for them. They were particularly attentive to their spiritual welfare : read good books, and brought priests to them.—What was very remarkable, not a single act of imprudence was ever charged on these interesting children. This circumstance Boudon frequently observed ; he ascribed it to a singular protection of Providence :—“ God,” he used to say, “ never neglects those who trust in him, and who, sincerely, make his glory the object of their lives.”

By these occupations, Boudon sanctified his studies, till he came to the end of rhetoric. In the mean time, he passed through trials of the severest kind. At a very tender age, he lost his father ; and, soon after his father’s decease, his mother contracted a second marriage. From that time, Boudon had no home ; the provisions, with which his family supplied him for his subsistence, were, from the first, very scanty ; by degrees, they were diminished, and, at length, absolutely discontinued. Thus, he himself became one of the poorest children of the association which he had instituted ; and was altogether supported by casual donations, or by alms, solicited by him in the streets. He was never heard to murmur at his lot ; but received what was given him with cheerful and humble gratitude ; and, whenever it exceeded his own immediate wants, he gave the excess to the poor.

When he had finished his studies, Boudon went to Paris, to study philosophy. He was wholly destitute of regular means of support, but Providence watched over him. One day, being quite faint with hunger, he went into the church of Notre Dâme. The abbé de Laval, of the illustrious house of Montmorency, afterwards bishop of Quebec, entered it at the same time: Boudon held out his hand to him for alms. The abbé refused him with some harshness, and walked into another part of the church. There, unseen by Boudon, he observed him, before the blessed sacrament, in that attitude of respect with which the Scriptures represent the seraphs before the throne of God. Charmed with the devotion of his countenance, and the length and fervour of his prayer, the abbé advanced to Boudon as a living saint, and respectfully asked him who he was, and what he wanted. Boudon shortly informed him, that he was a poor student, and wished to prosecute his studies; but that he had no means of doing it; and that, being at the moment in want of bread, he had implored his charity for alms. The abbé took him into his house, and from that time provided for his subsistence and education.

Being thus secure of his temporal support, Boudon was better enabled to devote himself to his studies and spiritual exercises. He joined a number of young gentlemen destined for the ecclesiastical state, and associated under the direction of father Bagot,

a jesuit, distinguished by his piety, and his skill in the care of souls. Most of them were persons of quality, and Boudon was the only poor man among them. They lived in community; had regular hours for rising, for going to bed, for their meals, for study, for prayer, for recreation. They lived in great retirement, and sought to die to the world and themselves. Boudon continued among them till he entered into holy orders. In the mean time he cultivated the acquaintance of several persons of extraordinary piety. Those who have no other information of the reign of Lewis the fourteenth than what the historians and memoir writers of his reign supply, have no conception that it abounded with persons of most exalted piety. Numbers of them were known to God alone; but others edified the faithful, among whom they lived, and the multitude of these was such, that there scarcely is a province in France, which did not contain some person whose memory, for the purest and most heroic virtues, and for extraordinary favours of grace, is not, even at this time, held in benediction among the true followers of the cross. The biographers of Boudon mention many such persons, whom, during his stay at Paris, he often frequented. He himself gives an account of some solitaries, whom he discovered in the neighbourhood of Paris, which it is impossible to read without admiration of their exemplary patience and piety. “The prayer
“of each,” says Boudon, “was different, but the

“ prayer of each was perfect, and almost all of
“ them abounded in those sublime gifts, which are
“ generally only the rewards of the most heroic
“ virtue.” One of them seems, by Boudon’s account, to have suffered the utmost degree of corporal pain that the human frame can endure : but he bore it with unfailing patience. He regularly assisted at the church service ; now and then, the extremity of his sufferings drew from him a sudden shriek ; or some other short expression of pain ; but the serenity of his countenance, and the mildness of all he said and did, showed that, in the midst of his excruciating torture, he was possessed of interior peace.

In this manner, Boudon endeavoured to acquire the sublimest of all sciences, that of living to God alone ; but he was fully sensible how easy it is to pronounce those words, and how difficult to practise the truth which they inculcate.—“ It is easy,” he observes in one of his writings, “ to live to God
“ alone in prayer : but who lives for him alone in
“ pain or pleasure ! In prayer, we sigh over the
“ vanity of all that the world esteems ; but we are
“ no sooner in company, than we are entangled by
“ the world, and sigh for its friendship and esteem.
“ The senses, which delight in pleasure and created
“ objects, insensibly lead us to believe them of
“ some value. Then God alone ceases to be
“ thought of, and the world usurps His place.
“ How many exclaim that the world is nothing !

“ Many devout persons are even supernaturally
“ persuaded of this truth. But is there one, even
“ of these, who is sufficiently strong to act up to
“ this adorable truth?—Behold the multitudes
“ which fill our towns;—behold, in one view, all
“ the nations of the universe. They are nothing
“ in the sight of God. O Holy Spirit of God!
“ imprint this truth in me. In some of the solemn
“ days, consecrated to thy honour, in some of the
“ festivals, in which the mysteries of thy life are
“ celebrated, vouchsafe to me, O Jesus! the grace
“ of knowing that God alone is, and that all else
“ is nought. How can a sinner esteem himself
“ any thing?—Nothing was ever comparable to the
“ holy humanity of Jesus, to his graces, his per-
“ fections, his grandeurs: but Jesus placed delight
“ in God alone: let Thy will, he prayed, not
“ mine, be done.”

After a long preparation, Boudon entered into holy orders and was ordained priest. Through the interest of the abbé de Laval, he was appointed to the archdeaconry of Evreux, the only ecclesiastical benefice which he enjoyed. His poverty, and the supposed meanness of his extraction, prejudiced the diocese against him: but his zeal for the service of God, his unaffected piety, and his love of the poor, soon gained him every heart. Persons of the highest rank thought they did themselves honour by showing him respect: wherever he preached, the church was crowded; his sermons

were universally admired ; they equally subdued and satisfied reason, and were followed by innumerable conversions.

The good effects of his labours soon appeared. Several, who had long scandalized the public by the open profligacy of their lives, were reclaimed by them ; and afterwards edified their neighbour, by their severe and persevering penance, as much as they had shocked him before by their excesses. Many, from slothfulness and tepidity, were animated by Boudon to the highest fervour.—The purity and austerity of his own life authorized him to preach to others : “ It does not,” says Bourdaloue, in his sermon on the feast of St. Andrew, “ belong to every one to preach the
“ way of the cross. It is an eternal truth, that it
“ is our duty to take up the cross and follow Christ ;
“ and that to do this, we must bear the cross voluntarily, and must glory in the cross. But this
“ eternal truth has not the same grace from every
“ mouth. It is equally the interest of all to understand and practise it ; but every one feels a
“ secret dislike of being told it by those, who do
“ not practise it ; and, generally speaking, when a
“ worldling takes upon him to instruct his hearers
“ in this saving truth, so far from being docile
“ scholars, they rebel ; they cannot bear that a
“ man, to whom none of the good things of this
“ life is wanting, should preach mortification and
“ penance to them. However zealous, however

“ eloquent, such a man may be, they think they
“ have a right to tell him, that the language of the
“ cross does not become him.” But nothing of
this could be opposed to Boudon ; his life was a
model of the devotion, the humility, and the
penance, which he preached. A celebrated preacher
ingenuously said to him, “ I don’t know how it
“ happens : my sermons are much more applauded
“ than yours : yet I scarcely gain a soul to God ;
“ while those whom you gain to him are countless.”
None of his sermons have reached us : but we may
conceive the nature of them from his writings. The
soul that lives for God alone speaks in every line
of them ; and they abound with passages of extraor-
dinary eloquence. “ O eternity ! eternity !” he
exclaims in one of his writings, (*Les Saintes Voies
de la Croix*, ch. vi.) “ how little dost thou enter
“ into the mind of men ! So deplorable is their
“ blindness, that they are wholly occupied by that,
“ which flits away as a shadow, and scarcely give
“ a thought to that, which is to endure for ever !
“ O eternity ! All men are to be buried in thy
“ unfathomable depths ! But a few years, (and
“ perhaps not even those remain to us,) and eter-
“ nity shall be our lot ! Shall it be a happy or a
“ miserable eternity ? We know not. O dreadful
“ uncertainty ! The pillars of the heavens shake :
“ even they, who are to judge the world, tremble.
“ But shake and tremble as we may, we cannot
“ avoid thee. O my soul ! let but a little time,

“ a moment, pass away, and eternity will be thy lot !”

His writings are very numerous : That which is intitled, “ *Dieu Seul*,” or, “ God Alone,” is considered to be his masterpiece : it was a popular work of devotion in France. All of them abound with solid instruction. They incessantly inculcate the obligation of observing the commandments of God, and of observing them, in the manner which the church prescribes ; but they particularly inculcate, that, among the commandments of God, we must include the maxims of the gospel : that self-denial, the pardon of injuries, the loving of our enemies, the carrying of the cross, and works of spiritual and corporal mercy, are not less the duty of every christian, than the commandments of the Decalogue. Several of his writings are calculated for those only who aspire to the heights of holy perfection.—With Bossuet and Fenelon he had the greatest admiration of the works of father Surin.

Religious communities were particularly respected and attended to by Boudon. He was always at their command : with many individuals in them he corresponded ; and, in all their temporal and spiritual distresses, they found in him an active and steady friend. He was the father of the poor, and the comforter of all in affliction. Immediately after he had been instituted into his archdeaconry, he circulated a devotional writing, by which, he placed

the district, within his jurisdiction, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This excited a smile: "But," said Boudon, "why should we not put ourselves under the protection of her, whose Son is omnipotent? In 1638, Lewis the thirteenth, solemnly invoked her; laid his sceptre and crown on the altar of the church of Notre Dame at Paris; put himself and his whole kingdom under her patronage; and every good man approved of his conduct. Now, if such a conduct became so great a monarch, what, lowly and abject, as I am, can I do better, than imitate his conduct?" Language sunk under him, when he spoke in the praise of the Mother of God. "No creature," he used to say, "however pure, has been so intimately united to Jesus Christ as his holy mother. In the order of Providence, there is nothing like her. Mother of God! that title, that dignity belongs to her alone. But she is also our mother. I want words to express what I feel, when I think of it. Let each one choose his devotion, the Holy Mother of God shall, after her Son, be the unwearied object of mine."

He lived in the presence of God, and his recollection of it was habitual. Travelling once in a barge, with a numerous company, whose conversation was engrossed by the objects which presented themselves to their view, it affected him to tears, to think how God was forgotten. "The heart of

“man,” he exclaimed, “is truly incomprehensible! One person points out a fine tree; every one looks at it; another remarks a fine house; immediately it becomes a general object of conversation: But, let any one say, God is here! Even the thought of him is avoided.”

Boudon's reliance on Providence was unbounded. Early in life he made a vow of poverty, and never was vow more rigidly observed. He never possessed more than mere necessities, and was often without those. When he set out on a journey, however distant the term of it might be, he never took with him more money than would satisfy the expence of the first day. For his subsistence and lodging, he trusted to the hospitality of the curates and religious houses, that should be in his way. He was sometimes disappointed, but Providence never absolutely deserted him.

His charity to his neighbours was most edifying. Their spiritual wants were his first care: to supply them, he refused no pains, and avoided no labour. Whole days he often spent in his confessional, in catechising or instructing the poor. His exertions to supply their temporal wants were great: and he never appeared so happy as when the lowest of the poor crowded about him for his instruction or his alms. His behaviour to them was not only kind, but respectful; in all of them, he beheld, to use his own words; (*Vie cachée avec Jesus en Dieu*, ch. iv.) “the person of Him, who chose for the

“ palace, in which he should be born, a poor stable ;
“ for the courtiers to fill it, low animals ; for its
“ furniture, naked walls ; for his cradle, a manger ;
“ for the time of his birth, a season of the bitterest
“ cold ; who, during many years, gained his bread
“ by the sweat of his brow ; and afterwards lived
“ on alms ; who, when every bird had his nest,
“ every fox his lurking hole, had no place in which
“ he could rest his head ; who died naked on the
“ cross. O my soul ! he, whom thou beholdest on
“ it, is the Lord of all things ! The universe is his.
“ Surely, a condition which *He* chose, must be
“ honourable. Honoured, then, and respected by
“ us all, be those who belong to it.”

All virtuous ecclesiastics were particularly respected by him. The idle and the voluptuous, he strove to reclaim ; those, who were contented to remain in decencies, he encouraged to nobler aims ; but, for those, who were truly men of God, his veneration had no limit.

In humility, few have surpassed him. It was his delight to be abject in the house of God ; to be employed in those occupations, which attract no notice ; which are irksome and laborious ; which others avoid ; and, in which success is attended with no renown. The instruction of poor children, and the attendance of the sick poor, on prisoners, and on criminals sentenced to death, were the employments which he coveted. He was never known to say any thing, that could recommend himself ;

and, for a time, the applause, which his sermons gained him, withheld him from preaching. His confusion, when he was praised, was visible; and showed how unpleasant it was to him to hear his praises.

It was to be expected, that a life so uniformly good; by which the public was so much edified, and which was so eminently useful to numberless individuals, would have attracted uniform and universal respect and love. But it pleased the Almighty, that Boudon should drink the cup of holy humiliation to its dregs. By incessant meditation on the sufferings of Christ, he had taught himself its value, and qualified himself for its bitterest draught. “O my God!” (he exclaims in a work we have cited), “Thou wast treated as one, “who had lost his intellects; and we seek the “reputation of wit! Thou wast held in no repute, “and we seek for honours! O my God! my divine “Sovereign! What are my humiliations, my sufferings, compared to Thine! Come then, O my “soul! Whatever it may cost us,—health, life, “reputation, friends, let us go to Calvary, to our “adorable King! His most holy mother and beloved disciple will bear us company. Let us die “with him; die, to the point of honour; to “pleasure; to ourselves: that, thus dying to all “besides, we may live to Jesus! and to him alone. “O my soul! How much better is it to be afflicted, “to be disgraced, to be poor, to be abandoned

“ with Jesus, in this life, and to be glorified for
“ ever with him in the next, than to enjoy the
“ honours and pleasures of this short and miserable
“ life, and then to be precipitated into utter dark-
“ ness, and suffer eternal confusion and shame,
“ among devils!—I earnestly conjure all who read
“ these lines, to meditate attentively on this im-
“ portant truth.”

The libertines threw the first stone at Boudon. No person, either in his sermons or writings, could abstain, more than he did, from personalities : but, when vice is attacked, however generally, every vicious individual feels the blow, and is apt to think it aimed at him : this indisposed a large description of persons against Boudon. A less numerous, but more formidable, host of enemies, he found in a sect, which, at that time, convulsed the church of France to its centre. Boudon had uniformly opposed them ; and they now took an active part against him. His great exertions were a secret reproach to the indolent part of the clergy of the diocese in which he lived : and the lustre of his reputation created envy. Thus a general attack was made upon him : he was charged with the grossest imprudencies, and even with the blackest crimes. All the artifices of calumny were resorted to, and they succeeded too well. His bishop was prejudiced against him ; almost all his friends deserted him ; and he became a subject of general abuse. Sermons were preached against him ; the

doors of every one were closed to him : the finger of the prudent, and even of the good, was pointed at him, as an object of infamy. But all the charges against him were general ; and so little of a specific nature was urged against him, that it never could be made a regular subject of ecclesiastical inquiry. Care was taken that the calumnies should find their way to Paris. There, at Rouen and Evreux, Boudon was equally a subject of universal scorn and derision. In the midst of this severe trial he possessed his soul in peace : he never published a word in his defence : he felt that the more he suffered, the more he resembled the divine Sufferer on Calvary ; and, resigning himself to His holy will, he trusted himself, his reputation and his all to him. On one occasion, he arrived at Paris, worn down by illness, without a single piece of money to purchase the nourishment of the day. A religious community, dedicated to the service of the poor, heard of his situation, and sent a person in search of him. He was found in a wretched garret, shaking with an ague, and with nothing for his subsistence but cold water. He was taken to the community ; and, when he entered the doors of the convent, he fell on his knees and exclaimed, “ Is it possible, O Jesus ! That
“ thy adorable providence should provide this re-
“ treat for such a miserable sinner as I am ! Thou,
“ who, when thou wast on earth, hadst no place
“ to repose thine head ! ” He frequently blessed

God for his sufferings : “ O my God,” he used to say, “ what have I done, that thou shouldest treat me, as thou treatest thy chosen favourites ! “ What have I done, that thou shouldest favour me with poverty, with ignominy, with suffering, “ with all this internal and external woe.”

In this afflicted and rejected state he remained seven years : at length, his heroic patience attracted the attention of some considerate persons : they began to remark, that nothing specific was laid to his charge ; and that, if he had been guilty of any real crime, it must, considering how long accusation of him had been invited, have appeared, and its existence proved beyond controversy : but that nothing of the kind had been charged on him. This induced them, to think that there was, at least, much exaggeration in what was said to his disadvantage : and that led them to inquiry, and every inquiry proved favourable to Boudon. It happened, about this time, that one of his most violent adversaries was detected in an odious crime : in his distress, the unhappy man had recourse to him, whom he had so grossly traduced. Boudon received him with open arms, comforted him, put him into a suitable course of penance, watched, as his guardian angel, over him, till the work of his conversion was complete ; and then procured for him admittance into a religious order. Previously to his entering into it, he presented himself before the bishop of Evreux, and acknowledged his

slanders of Boudon. Astonished beyond description, the bishop sent for Boudon, and commanded him, by virtue of holy obedience, to justify himself, at a large meeting of the bishop and clergy of the diocese, which the bishop convened for the purpose. Then, for the first time, Boudon entered on his defence, and completely convinced the prelate, and every person present, of the absolute falsehood of every charge which had been brought against him.

From that time the innocence of Boudon was universally acknowledged; and he was an object of universal veneration. He was consulted from every part of France, and some of the most illustrious persons of the age put themselves under his spiritual direction. Among them, his biographers mention, Henrietta-Febronia, princess of Bouillon, a niece of Turenne, and as illustrious for her piety, as her uncle was for his military talents. The reputation of Boudon was not confined to France. The duke and duchess of Bavaria prevailed on him to spend some time with them at their palace at Munic, that they might confer with him, at leisure, on their spiritual concerns. They showed him the greatest honours, but he would receive no present from them; and, on the second day, after he quitted them, he was, as usual, pennyless, and had nothing but Providence to trust to for his support; but wherever he went he was received as an angel of God.

In the latter part of his life, his infirmities

made it necessary for him to confine his exertions to preaching, and his archdiaconal functions. He was never melancholy ; but was blessed in a high degree with the gift of holy compunction. From the general tenour of his life, it may be thought that his failings were not greater than those into which holy writ informs us, that even the just man falls seven times a day. But, to a mind so enlightened as Boudon's on spiritual subjects, every such failing appeared in the nature of an act of rebellion to the divine will ; and therefore a crime which could not be too greatly deplored. On the other hand, his humility made him apprehensive that he was guilty of sins which he did not discover. Thus he lived in constant awe of the divine judgments ; and his feelings, even when he most exulted in the mercy of God, were those of a contrite and humble heart. His humility also made him distrust his apparent good : and, when he thought of the gospel truths, that " death will come on us " at the time when we least expect ; that man dies " but once ; that no one knows, whether he be an " object of love or of hatred ; that, after death " cometh judgment, and after judgment, eternal " bliss or eternal misery ;" he was seized with holy fear. This fear for himself extended to his neighbour, when he contemplated the general forgetfulness of God. " When I consider," he used to say, " the churches in towns, I see many persons in them : but I see too many who behave

“ irreverently ; and I see several who make them
“ mere thoroughfares. How can they forget, that
“ God, though invisible, resides in every church, in
“ all his majesty, and all his power, and that he most
“ severely punishes every profanation of his sanc-
“ tuaries. When I consider the churches in the
“ villages, I scarcely see any person in them,
“ except on a Sunday, so that Jesus Christ, as he
“ describes himself, is as solitary in them, as the
“ sparrow on the house top, or the pelican of the
“ wilderness. Yet the holy tabernacles, in which
“ Christ universally resides, should be the refuge
“ of all who are afflicted, the treasure of all the
“ poor, the asylum of all the persecuted, the spiri-
“ tual food of all the hungry.—No guards prevent
“ our approach to him, all avenues to him are open,
“ he invites all to him : but how few accept the
“ invitation ! Those that accept it well know, that
“ an hour passed at his feet, is better than a thou-
“ sand spent in the tabernacles of sinners.” This
spiritual blindness of mankind he bitterly deplored ;
it sometimes made him feel a wearisomeness of life,
and breathe his soul in pious aspirations for another
and a better world.

But his piety was neither morose nor selfish—
his advice was always given in the most soothing
terms ; and, however absorbed he might be in any
of his devotions, he quitted it without reluctance
when his neighbour's good required it. He used
to say, that a troublesome or unwelcome interrup-

tion, and the person who causes it, should be received with cheerfulness. A clergyman complained to him, that he was oppressed by crowds of disagreeable persons, who did not profit by his instructions. "My dear friend," Boudon said to him, "do not lose courage. Never abate of your endeavours to serve your neighbour. We have not laid down our lives for him, as Jesus Christ, who should be our model, did on the cross. Be assured that God is often more glorified by the patient exertions of those who labour without effect, than by those, whose labours are crowned with the greatest success. After all, it is our labour in the service of God, not the fruit of that labour, which God requires of us, and has promised to reward." But, though Boudon wished that persons should be most zealous and active in the service of God, he wished their zeal and activity to be of the gentlest kind. "When you are obliged," he used to say, "to advise or admonish, never use injurious, contemptuous, or offensive terms. Remember that you speak to persons who are members of Jesus Christ, and that he has announced to us, that, at the last day we shall be judged as we have judged others. Speak to every one with gentleness; be rude to none; listen with patience to all who speak to you. When you cannot do what is required of you, do not refuse it abruptly; refuse it civilly and humbly." This advice is certainly excellent;

and it was given by one who uniformly practised it. "Figure to yourself," says Collêt, the latest biographer of Boudon, "a man who never appeared sensible of the bad temper or waywardness of his neighbour, who received harsh treatment as another would kindness; who, in every occurrence, and even under the severest trials, was always serene and affable; whose language was uniformly civil, unaffected, full of piety, prudent and charitable; who was ever attentive to avoid saying any thing which tended to his own advantage; who always listened with modest attention, and interrupted no one, unless the glory of God, or the defence of his neighbour, made it necessary."—How justly does this description of Boudon verify the golden axiom of St. Francis of Sales, "That a good Christian is never outdone in good manners!"

Boudon now touched on the eternal years, which, from the earliest dawn of his reason, he had always had in his mind, and for which his whole life had been a constant preparation. He beheld their approach with pious resignation and firm confidence in the mercy of God. To prepare himself for his last hour, he secluded himself, for some time before his death, wholly, from the world. This he describes as the happiest part of his life: "Oh what a grace is it to be entirely separated from the world! The world is full of infection; it is difficult to remain, even for a short time, in it,

“ without being infected with its contagion. It is good for me to attach myself to God ! In Him I have ever trusted, and will ever trust.” In this awful hour, four things gave him humble joy—the poverty in which he had lived, the slanders he had borne without reply, his constant devotion to the immaculate Virgin-mother of God, and the ridicule to which it had exposed him. His sufferings were great ; when the physician asked him how he did : “ Very ill,” was his answer, “ blessed be God ! his holy mother ! the angels and saints !” At length, the physician told him, that there was no longer any hope : He received the information with visible satisfaction ; he thanked the physician for the attention which he had shown him ; he thanked, in like manner, all other persons, who had assisted him in his illness : he desired that his friends might be informed of his approaching dissolution, and that he requested their prayers. This was his final Adieu to every thing earthly. “ It is now,” he exclaimed in a transport of holy joy, “ that I am in the hands of divine Providence ! My holy mother through life ! All human means now desert me ! This is my comfort ! My joy ! I now can truly say, God alone ! and God alone, for all eternity, in union with my Saviour.”

He received the sacrament of extreme unction, and then for the last time, received the holy communion. He soon after expired. “ God alone,” were the last words he was heard to pronounce :

He was in the seventy-ninth year of his age when he died.

A few minutes before he expired, observing his room full of persons, he desired an ecclesiastic to say to them from him, “ that he exhorted them most
“ earnestly, to serve and love God with their whole
“ soul : and, to remember, that, in the region of
“ God alone, into which he was then rapidly ad-
“ vancing, and in which all of them would, sooner
“ or later, find themselves, it was always discovered,
“ (but often too late), that TO LOVE AND SERVE
“ GOD WAS ALL THEY HAD TO DO ON EARTH.”

THE
L I F E
OF
DOM ARMAND-JEAN LE BOUTHILLIÈR
DE RANCÉ,
ABBOT REGULAR AND REFORMER OF THE
MONASTERY OF LA TRAPPE.

THE

LIFE OF DE RANCÉ.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Sketches of the Lives of BOSQUET and FENELON, by the writer of these pages, have presented to the public a view of two of the brightest ornaments of the church of France. Both of them were eminent for the purity of their morals, their learning, and their eloquence: but, while each of them made the principles of the gospel the rule of his conduct, each of them was attentive to the forms and decencies of polished life: and thus far, both of them, it may be said, kept terms with the world.

From the world, the venerable martyr of penitential austerity, a sketch of whose life now solicits the reader's attention, fled altogether. In the full enjoyment of its pleasures, and in the immediate expectation of its honours, he perceived the emptiness of all it has to give: he was struck with horror at his worldly life, divorced himself entirely from

the world, and, in an obscure abbey in Normandy, revived the austerities of St. Bernard and his first disciples. To the same austerities, all are not called ; but all may see from them, the enormity of sin, in the view of a person whom God enlightens ; and the degree of penance, by which, in the opinion of such a person, it should be atoned. The Life of the Abbé de Rancé has been written by M. de Maupeou, by Dom le Nain, the brother of M. de Tillemont, and by M. Marsollièr, canon of Usèz, the celebrated biographer of St. Francis of Sales. From these works, from the writings of the abbé de Rancé, from the *Relations de la vie et de la mort de quelques Religieux de la Trappe*, (4 vol. 8vo.) and from the *Description du Plan en Relief de l'Abbaye de la Trappe, présenté au Roi, par le Frere Pacome, Religieux Solitaire, Paris, 4to, 1708*, the following pages have been principally compiled.

CHAP. I.

The Birth and Education of the Abbé de Rancé.

THE House of Bouthillière, one of the most illustrious in Normandy, occupied several of the highest dignities of the church and state, when the abbé de Rancé came into the world. Claude de

Bouthillier, the head of it, was, at that time, secretary of state, and became afterwards superintendent of the finances. Leon count of Chavigny, his eldest son, was also secretary of state, and was treasurer of the orders of the king, and chancellor of Gaston de France, duke of Orleans. Sebastian, a younger brother of Claude, was bishop of Aire; Denys le Bouthillier, lord of Rancé, president in the *chambre des comptes*, in the *cour des aides* and finances in Burgundy, was another brother of Claude; and Victor, his only other brother, was archbishop of Tours. Denys had three sons; the eldest of them was, from him, called Denys; John the abbé de Rancé, the subject of these pages, was the second of them; and Henry was the third.

The abbé de Rancé was born at Paris on the 9th of January 1626. On the same day, he was privately baptized; the cardinal de Richelieu and the marchioness of Effiat were his sponsors. It is universally agreed, that, as a child, he was remarkably engaging; and that, at a very early age, he gave unequivocal signs both of solid judgment and brilliant parts. His father was particularly attentive to his education. He provided him with a master for the Latin, another for the Greek language, and a third to instruct him in religion, to attend to his manners, and to form him for public life. Great care was taken to perfect him in dancing, fencing, and riding; and, being originally designed for the army, he was regularly instructed in military

exercises. He fully answered the pains which were bestowed on his education : his diligence and rapid success in his pursuits have not often been exceeded ; and he gave early indications of an honourable mind, and an affectionate disposition.

In the tenth year of his age, he lost his elder brother : this gave a different direction to his education. As his elder brother was in possession of many rich ecclesiastical benefices, which, by his decease, became vacant, his father, wishing to preserve them in his family, determined to engage his second son in the ecclesiastical state. The son's disposition coincided with the father's views, and the benefices were secured for him ; so that, before he attained his eleventh year, he became, at once, canon of Notre Dâme de Paris, abbot of La Trappe, a Cistercian abbey, abbot of Notre Dâme du Val, an abbey of the order of St. Augustin, abbot of St. Simphorien de Beauvais, a Benedictine abbey, prior of Boulogne of the order of Grandmont, and prior of St. Clementin, in Poitou*. " Thus," says Marsollièr, " between the tenth and eleventh years of his age, having rendered no service to the church, and even at an age, when he was not capable of rendering her any, he was in the receipt of a yearly income of between fifteen thousand and twenty thousand livres." Allowing for the difference of the times, and the different value of money in France and England, they may be

* See Appendix, Note I.

considered as equal to half as many English pounds.

But, even with this accumulation of benefices on the young abbé, his family was not satisfied ; and interest was made with the king, to confer upon him, one more. His youth was objected to him by father Caussin the king's confessor. To remove the objection, the friends of the abbé expatiated on his talents, his application, and his wonderful progress in learning, from which, they wished to insinuate the good policy of attaching a youth of such hopes to the service of the church. The good father lent an unwilling ear to their observations ; but, at last, was prevailed upon to put some general questions to the abbé, respecting his studies. Surprised by his answers, he presented Homer to him, and desired him to translate from it, into the French language, a passage which he pointed out to him. This he did, without the slightest hesitation. As the text was accompanied by a Latin version, father Caussin thought he might have availed himself of it, and have made his translation from the Latin, and not from the Greek. To ascertain, if this were the fact, he placed his glove over the latin version ; and the young abbé continuing his translation, with the same facility, the father told him, " he must have the eyes of a lynx to see through the glove ;" and from that time withdrew his resistance to his majesty's intentions in the abbé's favour.

The abbé gave much stronger proof of his consummate knowledge of the Greek language, by the edition, which he published, whilst he was in the twelfth year of his age, of the works of Anacreon, with Greek scholia of his own composition. It appeared with the title *Anacreontis Odaæ, Græce tantum, cum Scholiis Johannis Armandi Buthilleri, Abbatis. Parisiis, J. Dugast, 1639, in 8vo.* It is dedicated to the cardinal de Richelieu, and excited the admiration of the learned. It appears that he had composed a French translation of the Poems of Anacreon, but it was not published.

CHAP. II.

The Abbé de Rancé applies himself to the study of Philosophy and Divinity, and is ordained Priest. His general habits, during this period of his life.

SOON after the destination of the abbé de Rancé to the ecclesiastical state, he was sent to the Collège d'Harcourt at Paris, to study philosophy. It does not appear that philosophy had particular charms for him; but he prosecuted the study of it with diligence. He dedicated his Theses to Ann of Austria, the queen consort of Lewis the fourteenth, and defended them with uncommon brilliancy.

All his biographers mention an extraordinary weakness, into which his philosophical studies led

him ; and which would be more surprising, if it were not chargeable, on many other distinguished characters. He became infatuated with judicial astrology, and persuaded himself that the destinies of men were written on the stars, in characters, intelligible to those, who had talents and industry to acquire the science of them. His theological studies weaned him from this visionary pursuit. To the study of theology, on the enlarged and liberal plan to which the *Dogmata Theologica* of Petavius had recently raised it, he applied with his characteristic ardour and perseverance ; and it was universally allowed by his contemporaries, that the knowledge, which he acquired of it, was exact, extensive and profound. He obtained the first place among the licentiates. He dedicated his Theses to the queen mother, and charmed his audience by the singular union of talent and elegance with which he defended them.

In this period of his life, he lost his father. A serious and affecting conversation, which they had, a short time before his decease, made a great impression on the abbé. In the disposition, in which he found himself, in a subsequent part of his life, this conversation often recurred to him ; but, at the time, of which we are now speaking, the gauds of life quickly chased it from his mind. Soon after he attained the age required for it, he received the order of priesthood, and immediately commenced preacher.

His biographers mention the eloquence of his sermons, and the grace and dignity with which they were delivered ; but none of them remain, and they are not noticed by any other of his contemporaries : it seems, therefore, highly probable, that they did not produce much effect. It is certain that one quality, without which a preacher seldom gains a heart to God, was altogether wanting to them. “ It does not,” says the first of preachers, Bourdaloue, in his sermon on the feast of St. Andrew, “ belong to every one, to preach the way of “ the cross. It is an eternal truth, that it is our “ duty to take up the cross, and follow Christ ; “ but this eternal truth has not the same grace “ from every mouth. It is equally the interest of “ all to understand and practise it ; but every one “ feels a secret dislike of being told it by those, “ who do not practise it : and, generally speaking, “ when a worldling takes on him to instruct his “ hearers in this saving truth, so far from being “ docile scholars, they rebel ; they cannot bear “ that a man, to whom none of the good things of “ this life is wanting, should preach to them, “ mortification and penance. However zealous, “ however eloquent, such a man may be, they “ think they have a right to tell him, that the “ language of the cross does not become him.”

Now, the abbé de Rancé, was certainly one of those preachers, to whom none of the good things of this life was wanting. The income, which he

derived from his benefices has been mentioned. It was doubled by the castle of Virèt and its dependencies, one of the noblest estates in Touraine, which devolved to him on the decease of his father.

He was at that time, says Marsollièr, in the flower of youth ; his stature rather above the middle size, elegant and well proportioned ; his physiognomy was very pleasing, an open forehead, an eye of fire, an air of united mildness and dignity. That high polish of manners, which the habits of a court alone confer, and which is equally attractive and imposing, he possessed in the highest degree. His furniture, his equipage, every thing about him, was most delicate and elegant ; but chastened by an appearance of modesty and simplicity, which, while it stifled censure, raised a high opinion of his general good taste and sense. In addition to these agreeable qualities, he possessed, in an eminent degree, many, which are truly estimable : great goodness of heart, great probity, great warmth and steadiness in friendship, a general desire to oblige, great charitableness, and undeviating attention to truth, an abhorrence of duplicity ; and, even in his greatest wanderings, a great attention to his character, and the decencies of life.

With this rare assemblage of agreeable and estimable qualities, he was equally the delight of his friends, and a favourite of the public ; and it was generally supposed that he would be speedily

advanced to the highest dignities of the church. The bishopric of St. Pol de Leon was offered to him ; he refused it ; “ but, in this refusal,” says Marsollièr, “ his respect for the prelacy, of which “ the habits of his life rendered him so unworthy, “ entered for nothing. He thought the revenue “ of the bishopric too small ; the situation of it “ disagreeable, and much too distant from court. “ His great object was, to be the coadjutor of his “ uncle, the archbishop of Tours : the credit of his “ family, and the favour of his friends at Versailles, “ seemed to promise him success in his views.”

A general assembly of the clergy having been convened at Paris, in the year 1655, the archbishop of Tours caused the abbé de Rancé to be elected deputy to it from the province of Touraine. He appeared in the assembly to great advantage : and the assembly, having determined on an edition of some of the Greek fathers, committed to him the superintendence of the work.

There being a difference, on some point of importance, between the assembly and the court, the assembly deputed him and a prelate of the first distinction, to the cardinal de Mazarin, to explain to him their views and enforce their propriety. From a fear of incurring the minister's displeasure, the prelate kept back many circumstances, which favoured the assembly's cause, and omitted several arguments, by which it might be supported. This, the abbé de Rancé noticed to the minister, and

brought forward, with great force and ability, the strong part of the case, and all the arguments in its support. The minister seemed displeased ; but afterwards spoke of the abbé's conduct, in terms of great commendation.

About the same time, the reversion, or, as it is termed in France, *la survivance* of the office of first almoner to Gaston duke of Orleans, the king's uncle, which was held by the archbishop of Sens, was conferred by the duke on the abbé de Rancé : and the assembly paid a flattering compliment to him on this event. Something however occurred in the assembly, which was unpleasant to the abbé de Rancé, and induced him, in spite of warm remonstrances from his friends, to absent himself from its meetings.

From this time, his retirement from the world, and complete conversion to God, are dated by his biographers. Some of them mention, and the others seem to allude to a circumstance, which had a great effect in producing this extraordinary change. A lady, it is said, of high rank and great personal charms, had attracted his affections. Arriving at her house, late at night, he ran up a staircase which led to a room, in which she and her father mostly sat : after tapping at the door, and hearing no reply, he softly opened it, and beheld her corpse*. It seems probable, that the impression made on him by this circumstance, accelerated his conversion.

* See Appendix, Note II.

CHAP. III.

The abbé de Rancé is converted to God.

IN the midst of his irregularities, the abbé preserved his belief in the great truths of religion, and sometimes reflected seriously, on the opposition of the general habits of his life to the rules of the gospel. He was an admirer of holiness in others; and, whenever piety was attacked, was its zealous defender. His mind was naturally serious; and, when any of his real friends called his attention to serious subjects, he listened to them with pleasure. On one occasion, the bishop of Châlons observed to him, “that, from his great natural and acquired
“endowments, something more respectable, than
“he had hitherto exhibited, might have been expected from him.”—“Does not your conscience,” he sometimes said to the abbé, “reproach you with
“the little you do for God, who has been so bountiful to you? I know you well enough to be
“assured, that if any one had done for you a
“hundredth part of what God has done, your
“gratitude to him would be boundless.”

These observations of his friends were not wholly without effect; and occasionally he discovered something of a faint resolution to amend his life. It was much strengthened by the following circumstance: Walking on the ground behind the church

of Notre Dâme, with his gun under his arm, a ball was fired from the opposite side of the river, and hit the steel clasp of the belt of his shooting-dress. This turned it off, and saved his life. “O, my God!” he exclaimed, in great agitation of mind, “what would have become of me, if thou hadst not had mercy on me!” This circumstance made a great impression on him; and his letters, written about this time, (1657), shew him, gradually rising from his irreligious sleep, to serious sentiments of religion. He was much struck with the endless agitation, restlessness, and total want of happiness, which the courtiers discovered. But nothing made so much impression on him, as what he observed of the hollowness of human friendship. By degrees, he discovered that, in the agreeable circle at Virèt, he had many companions, without a single friend. From that time, Virèt lost its charm for him; and he began to read books of devotion. At first, he found no pleasure in them; but persisting in the perusal of them, his taste for them increased, his thoughts of a change of life became more serious, and he determined to converse on it, with some person of acknowledged good sense and piety. In this disposition of mind, he put himself under the direction of father de Mouchy, an oratorian; a person of high birth, solid parts, and great experience in religious concerns. To him, the abbé opened himself without reserve, and was persuaded by him to make a spiritual retreat.

In every age of christianity, both the sinner and the just have been recommended to make temporary separations from the world ; and to dedicate some days, in solitude and silence, to prayer and spiritual meditation. The system, into which this has been reduced, both in practice and theory, by the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, is among the many obligations, which we owe to that great man and his disciples. In many towns on the continent, St. Vincent of Paul, and his successors, founded regular establishments for this holy occupation. The most distinguished of them was, the *Maison de St. Lazare* at Paris. There, all who presented themselves, were received for ten days, on making a solemn promise, that, during their stay, they would observe the rules of the institution. They were lodged and boarded : if they offered a small gratuity, it was received ; but none was either asked, or expected. If the person, who presented himself, was unknown to the superior of the house, a testimonial of his character, from a known hand, was required. No distinction of rank was shewn, either in the reception or treatment of the applicants ; so that the *cordons-bleus*, the officer, the ecclesiastic, the barrister, the tradesman and the domestic, often met promiscuously in the refectory of St. Lazare. Under the direction of *mademoiselle le Gras*, his faithful assistant in all his good works, St. Vincent founded at Paris a similar establishment of retreat for the devout sex ; and there too, the

same refectory often contained a lady of high rank, and another's maid-servant. All rose at an early hour, said together the morning prayer; then, were employed in some spiritual exercise, till they assembled at mass: after mass, they breakfasted; and then met in the church, where a short meditation, on some important truth of christianity, was read to them: but, after each sentence, the priest, who read the meditation, suggested the sentiments, which that sentence should raise, and then paused for a few minutes, to let them make a due impression on the hearers. At the close of the meditation, he suggested the resolutions, which the hearers should form in consequence of the pious sentiments and affections, which had occurred to them during the meditation. A similar public meditation was made in the afternoon, and the day closed with a public evening prayer. The other part of the day, except the time of meals, was employed in other spiritual exercises. The meals were taken in a public refectory; a book of piety was read at them: and, except for a short time after dinner, absolute silence was observed throughout the day. It is obvious how ten days, thus successively spent in prayer and pious reading, would "remove the " stony from their hearts, and make new flesh " regenerate grow." (Par. Lost, xi. 5.)

Such were the occupations of the persons, who made a spiritual retreat in the Maison de St. Lazare: and to these, at a similar institution of the

oratorians, but, on a smaller scale, the abbé de Rancé, under the direction of father de Mouchy, devoted himself. At the end of the retreat, he received, from the father, a plan of life ; and, with a firm resolution of observing it punctually, returned to Virèt. There, he lived an exemplary life of pious regularity : some portion of the day, he dedicated to prayer, some, to the study of theology, particularly the reading of the Holy Scriptures ; and he gave large alms : but the general style of his establishment remained ; and thus far, he still continued to keep terms with the world.

About this time, Gaston the duke of Orleans determined on the reformation of his life. The abbé de Rancé was then in the possession of the office of almoner to his royal highness. Having heard of the abbé's conversion to God, the duke thought the abbé might be of use to him, in the execution of his own pious resolutions, and required his attendance. After his arrival, the duke took an early opportunity of unbosoming himself to him ; and the abbé explained to him the nature of his obligations, with the utmost sincerity, but never forgetting the respect, which was due to his rank. In a short time, the good effect of the abbé's visit was seen. " The conduct of his royal highness," says Marsollièr, " became, from that time, as edifying, as, before that time, it had been scandalous. " After the example of the prince, the whole court " was changed : those, who remember what passed

“ on this occasion, declare it incredible, what good
“ was produced, at the court of his royal highness,
“ by the abbé de Rancé.”

Some time afterwards, the duke was attacked by the illness, of which he died. At the request of the abbé, father de Mouchy was sent for, to prepare the duke for his passage into eternity. He expired in the most edifying sentiments of devotion. The moment he ceased to breathe, he was completely abandoned by all his attendants, and father de Mouchy and the abbé de Rancé were left alone, with his remains.—“ Great God !” exclaimed the former, “ where now is all the dignity, all the
“ grandeur, we have just seen ! Distinction, glory,
“ pleasure, all have disappeared, all are vanished !
“ Eternity has begun for him, and time exists for
“ him, no more ! But a moment ago, he stood
“ before the terrible Judge ! Sentence is passed
“ on him ! All is over ! He is now happy or
“ miserable for all eternity.”

“ God,” replied the abbé de Rancé, “ has
“ mercifully suggested to me the same reflections.
“ What is the wretched world, to which I still hold
“ by so many ties, but which, I myself despise,
“ and from which God so often solicits me to
“ withdraw myself !—The delusion is now over,
“ from this moment, I abandon the world. But
“ how is it to be done ? I have a thousand engage-
“ ments ! What am I to do with my benefices !”

Father de Mouchy approved of the abbé's good

dispositions, and recommended him, for the present, to be satisfied, with confirming himself in them, by prayer and a pious life, and to determine on nothing without deliberation, and the counsels of the wise. He observed to the abbé, that the real obstacles in the way of his conversion, were not either so many or so great, as he apprehended ; that, as soon as he should set about his conversion in earnest, many circumstances, which then seemed to raise so much difficulty, would prove of no account ; that he should pray for the grace of God ; and that God refused his grace to none, who prayed for it with humility, fervour, and perseverance. Soon after this conversation, the abbé de Rancé returned to Virèt.

CHAP. IV.

Commencement of the Penitential Life of the Abbé de Rancé.

AFTER passing some days in a solitary country-house, belonging to one of his friends, in the province of Maine, and fortifying himself, during his stay there, in his good resolutions, by incessant prayer, and pious meditation, the abbé de Rancé returned to the Chateau de Virèt and its elegance. “ The true idea,” says father Surin, (*Dialogues Spirituels, Livre I. c. 13.*) “ of a heart reprobated

“ by God, is seen in a rich man, who inhabits a
“ large house, splendidly furnished ; who is lux-
“ uriously served, and gaily dressed ; who plays
“ deep, spends his time agreeably, keeps a brilliant
“ equipage, and looks on the poor as beings that
“ do not belong to him.” Nearly in these words,
the biographers of the abbé de Rancé relate the
sentiments, which the abbé expressed, when, after
the profound and long meditations, which he had
just made, on the ways of the cross, he found him-
self, in his own mansion. “ Where am I ?” he
exclaimed ; “ Either the Gospel deceives us, or
“ this is the house of a reprobate ! Is it possible
“ that I should have so long forgotten my duty !
“ so long sacrificed to luxury and vanity !” He
immediately determined to banish them from his
mansion. He dismissed the greater part of his
servants, sold his plate, and distributed the pro-
duce of it among the poor. He fasted much ; and,
at his dinner, confined himself to one dish. He
gave up entirely the sports of the field ; his clothes
were of the coarsest kind ; he dressed and undressed
himself without assistance, and always without a
fire :—it is remarkable, that, in a late period of
life, he frequently mentioned, that none of the
austerities, which he had practised, had appeared
to him, in prospect, so alarming, as the thought of
rising, in winter, without a fire.

At first, he devoted to study, the whole of the
time, which he did not give to prayer : but, finding

this incompatible with his health, he used great bodily exercise; at first, by compassionate and charitable visits among the poor; but, finding further exercise necessary, he employed himself in coarse bodily labour.

In the *Opuscules de Fleury*, (Paris, 1807), a recent publication of great importance on many accounts, that excellent writer gives, in different short articles, his advice to beginners in a spiritual life. They deserve to be universally circulated: In the forty-ninth of them, he says, “ When a
“ person is determined to live according to the
“ rules of the Gospel, he should try to raise him-
“ self above a false shame, by informing his friends,
“ without ostentation or hypocrisy, that he is de-
“ termined to abstain from every thing contrary to
“ salvation. Such a step is a defence against many
“ snares, it even fortifies a person in his good reso-
“ lutions, as he feels, that he will sink in the
“ opinion of the world, if, from fickleness, he
“ should not persevere in the path of virtue.”

This line of conduct, the abbé de Rancé appears to have followed: he neither ostentatiously displayed, nor, from fear of the world's ridicule, concealed the change of his life. As might be expected, all his friends and relations conspired to divert him from his new course. Parties to Virèt were made, to rally him out of his devotion; but he had too much wit to be rallied, on any subject, with impunity; and too much steadiness, to be

discomfited, in a good purpose, by so slight a weapon. Others wished to reason him out of devotion ; but, when a person engages in devotion from principle, and acts up to it, reason will be on his side, and enable him to foil his adversaries at their own weapon. A more specious attack was made on him, by those, (and among them was his uncle the archbishop of Tours), who observed to him, that, “ to secure eternal salvation, it is not
“ necessary to seclude one’s self from the world ;
“ that without a particular call, it is the duty of
“ every person to remain in the station, in which
“ Providence places him, by his birth, and to conform to the consequences to which it naturally
“ leads. That his birth evidently destined him for
“ public life ; that Providence called him to it, by
“ the talents which God had given him ; that the
“ church stood in need of his services ; and that
“ to deny them to her, was evidently to resist the
“ will of God.”

Without discussing the general truth of these propositions, the abbé de Rancé observed, in answer to them, that they did not apply to his case. He remarked, that he had already been subdued by the world and its vanities ; and his own reflections convinced him, that he was unable to contend with them ; that, with this sense of his condition, to renew the battle, must be to tempt the Almighty ; and that, after his former failings, and his long habits of offending against the laws of God,

a life of penance was all that remained for him : that repeated consideration had convinced him, that, in his regard, a life of penance was inconsistent with a life in the world ; and that, under these circumstances, he was satisfied, that, by remaining longer in it, he should resist the will of God. These conversations between him and his friends were often repeated : at length, seeing him determined on the course, which he intended to pursue, they ceased to importune him on the subject.

CHAP. V.

The Abbé de Rancé sells all his Estates ; gives the Money arising from the Sale of them to the Poor ; resigns all his Benefices, except the Abbey de la Trappe ; and retires to it.

WHEN the abbé de Rancé made these resolutions of quitting the world, he had no intention of entering into the monastic state ; his views did not go further, than leading, in extreme solitude, a life of great abstinence and prayer, employing the whole of his large income, beyond what should be absolutely necessary for his subsistence, on this narrow plan, in purposes of religion and charity. But two circumstances often presented themselves to his mind ; and, every day, gave him greater uneasiness ;—his holding a plurality of benefices,

and the manner which, both in the lifetime of his father, and since he himself came into possession of his benefices, the revenues of them had been employed.

In the beginning of his conversion, his conscience had not disquieted him on these grounds, as he saw many persons of learning and exemplary lives holding more than one benefice, without any visible remorse : but, the more he advanced in a spiritual life, the more he doubted the lawfulness of the practice, and the stronger the arguments against it appeared to him. He also began to feel, that, if the use, which had been made of the income of his benefices, were unjustifiable, he might be subject to a weighty obligation of restitution, as it might be his duty to restore to those, on whom that portion of his revenue ought to have been expended, or to the general body of the poor, as their representatives, the amount of the misapplication. To that, the whole value of his estate, if it should be converted into money, would be little more than adequate ; and thus, if he were conscientiously obliged, on the one hand, to sell the whole of his estates, and distribute the produce of them among the poor, and conscientiously obliged, on the other, to resign all his benefices, he would be reduced, from being one of the richest among the second order of the French clergy, to a situation nearly approaching to poverty. This was a very serious consideration, and he entered upon it, with the feelings of one,

who was determined to do nothing rashly, but, who was determined, in all events, to save his soul.

His first step was to consult the bishop of Comminges, a prelate of distinguished learning and piety. The subject was frequently discussed between them. The prelate declined giving him a decisive answer upon it, and referred him to the bishop of Alèt, the oracle of many persons in France : but the abbé perceived from the language of the bishop of Comminges, that he thought the matter very serious. In his road to the bishop of Alèt, he met with the bishop of Châlons, to whom he was much attached, and who had always thought his conversion probable. In a large company, where the abbé was the subject of the conversation, and the dissipation of his life bitterly arraigned, the good bishop checked the railers : “ It is true,” he said, “ that the moment of God, for the abbé’s “ good, is not yet arrived : but it may arrive ; and, “ if God is patient with him, we, who stand so “ much in need of the divine patience, should also “ bear with him.” It was therefore with singular pleasure, that he heard from the abbé, the subject of his visit : he gave him a general opinion against the lawfulness of pluralities and commendams, but, for his particular conduct, in respect to them, the bishop of Châlons also referred the abbé to the bishop of Alèt.

On that prelate, the abbé accordingly waited. After repeated conversations on the subject, the

good bishop prayed, and, by his desire, the abbé joined him in prayer to the Almighty, to inspire him with the opinion he should deliver on the points proposed to him by the abbé. Then, after a pause, the prelate signified to the abbé, that he thought it was his duty to sell all his estates, and, after discharging the incumbrances on them, to employ the money arising from the sale, in making the repairs, which he and his father had neglected to make, of the churches upon his benefices ; and to distribute the ultimate surplus among the poor. The abbé remarked, that the particular poor, on whom the revenues of his benefices ought to have been expended, were dead, or dispersed, so that any restitution to them was become impossible. “ The general poor,” replied the bishop, “ are their representatives. In the Hotel-Dieu and the Hôpital-Générale at Paris, there are poor from every part of France ; and your obligation of restitution will be answered by distributing the property among them.”—“ But,” observed the abbé, “ if I should thus distribute my whole patrimony among the poor, all my family will rise in arms against me ; they will never pardon me ; I shall be their anathema.”—“ That,” replied the bishop, “ is not the question. Are you not conscientiously convinced, that your father, during your minority, and you, since you came of age, have diverted the revenue of your benefices from the churches and buildings, in the

“repairing of which, and from the poor, in the support of whom, it should have been applied?” —“I am convinced of it,” said the abbé.—“Are you not also convinced that, for this misapplication, complete restitution is due from you to the injured parties?” The abbé acknowledged that he was: “Have you any other means of making this restitution, than selling your patrimony, and dividing its produce among the poor?” —“None whatever,” replied the abbé.—“Recollect, then,” said the prelate, “that, the point, on which you desired my opinion, was—what, in your circumstances, was your duty—not, what would please your family. It is particularly, in respect to circumstances like yours, that we should apply the words of Christ,—*If any one love his father or mother more than me, he is unworthy of me*: and the words of St. Paul, *If I wish to please men, I am not a servant of Christ.*”

The abbé de Rancé surrendered:—he expressed to the bishop his perfect conviction, that, it was his duty to make the restitution, which the bishop had prescribed; and that, as he had no other means of making this restitution, it was incumbent on him to distribute his patrimony in the manner pointed out by the bishop. He assured the bishop, that he was firmly resolved to make the sacrifice; and that no time should be lost in carrying his resolution into effect.

With respect to his benefices, the bishop of Alêt

descended less into particulars : he seemed to think he might conscientiously retain them, provided that, after reserving a decent subsistence from them, for himself, he disposed of the residue in the manner prescribed by the canons : but even this, he said, was only to be understood, with the supposition, that he took an active part in the service of the church, as no person could have a legitimate title to be supported by the revenues of the church, who did not earn it by real exertions in her service. He advised him, however, to remain some time longer, in doing solitary penance ; but intimated to him, that a perpetual seclusion from mankind was not his vocation.

From the bishop of Alèt, the abbé went to the bishop of Pamiérs, and complained good-humouredly to him, of the harshness, with which his neighbour had treated him : “ He treats every one, in the same harsh way,” said the bishop ; “ but he seems to have left you in possession of your benefices. How many of them have you ! ” — “ Five,” answered the abbé ; “ three abbeys and two priories.” — “ That,” said the bishop, “ is four more than I should have allowed you, if you had submitted the matter to my decision. What conclusion will the world at large draw from your conduct, if you should retain a plurality of benefices ? Here, they will cry, is the abbé de Rancé ! So learned, so enlightened ! who has sold his patrimony, and distributed it among the poor !

“ who professes to walk in the narrow way ! yet,
“ he holds, at the same time, his three abbeys, and
“ his two priories ! After this, who is to tell us,
“ that a plurality of benefices, is as objectionable
“ as councils, canons and divines proclaim it ! ”

For this attack, the abbé was not prepared : he had resigned, in his good resolutions, the whole of his patrimony, to the poor, and determined on a life of abstemiousness : but this was not incompatible with a decent appearance in the world ; and to a decent appearance in the world, the last refuge of self-love, he still clung. He was therefore astonished at the prelate’s suggestion ; “ How can I
“ subsist,” he said, “ upon one benefice, in a style
“ fit for my birth and condition ? How am I to
“ support my servants ? ” The bishop observed to him, that, if it really were his object to give himself entirely to God, he would find style and servants rather an obstacle, than a help to his good resolutions. “ Besides,” continued the bishop, “ though
“ I disapprove your plan of entire solitude, I do
“ not wish to engage you in the world. On the
“ contrary, I recommend to you a life of great re-
“ tirement. Resign all your benefices but one ;
“ reside on that benefice ; but associate with you
“ some virtuous ecclesiastics, and employ yourself
“ with them, in the instruction of the poor, attend-
“ ing the sick, and generally in assisting the parish
“ priests in the neighbourhood, in the discharge of
“ their spiritual functions.” The abbé submitted :

he had before promised the bishop of Alêt to dispose of his patrimony for the benefit of the poor ; he now promised the bishop of Pamiérs to content himself with a single benefice.

In these sentiments, he returned to the bishop of Comminges, and observed to him, how harshly the two other bishops had treated him. One of them, he said, had plundered him of all his patrimony ; the other had reduced him to a single benefice. “ Whether a person,” said the bishop of Comminges, “ can conscientiously hold a single benefice in commendam, is disputed among divines : the better opinion is, that he cannot. I must therefore go still further than the bishop of Pamiérs : like him, I advise you to reduce yourself to a single benefice : but, let me advise you to cease holding it in commendam, and to become a professed monk of the order, to which it belongs, and thus you will become its regular abbot.”

If the abbé de Rancé was struck, when the bishop of Pamiérs recommended him to resign all his benefices, excepting one, he was petrified, when the bishop of Comminges recommended him to become a monk. When he recovered himself, “ I confess,” he said to the bishop of Comminges, “ that I feel a great inclination for solitude ; but “ I must also confess, that I have a horror of the “ cowl.”

With these sentiments the abbé quitted the

prelate, and returned to Virèt. He immediately took proper measures for the sale of all his estates. He met with great difficulty ; and as he foresaw, became anathema in his family ; but at length, he effected the sale, and, with the exception of a small sum, which he afterwards expended in repairing the monastery of La Trappe, he distributed the whole of the purchase money, which remained after discharging the incumbrances upon the estate, among the poor of the Hotel-Dieu and the Hôpital-Générale at Paris. He then resigned all his benefices, except the abbey of La Trappe ; but he took great care that they fell into proper hands. After this, he retired to the monastery of La Trappe, with an intention of burying himself in it, in solitude and prayer ; but with no intention of professing himself a monk of that, or any other religious order.

Such was the celebrated conversion of the abbé de Rancé. It is obvious, that it was a work of time, and that he proceeded in it with great deliberation. Marsollièr computes, that, between his first serious thoughts of it, and his profession in La Trappe, eight years intervened. The stages of his conversion he himself thus describes, in one of his letters :—

“ I remained in the world till my thirtieth year.
“ My conversion arose from the disgust, which I
“ felt with its ways ; from my discovering that, in
“ all its greatness, there is nothing solid. I was

“ perpetually witness of the chagrin, vexation,
“ ennui, and infirmities of those, who were thought
“ most happy. I saw that their hearts were torn
“ into pieces, in various ways, by their passions.
“ I considered the situation of those, who possessed
“ the prime objects of my ambition : I was struck
“ with the difference between their lives and their
“ duties : I was also struck with the death of some
“ of them ; their insensibility in the moments,
“ which preceded that, in which their lot was to be
“ decided for eternity.

“ I sought repose ; and, if unfortunately I had
“ met with it, in the career, in which I was en-
“ gaged, I should not have looked beyond it. But
“ I became ashamed of myself. Agreeable parties,
“ amusements, plans of aggrandisement, all, by
“ degrees, appeared to me so vain, and empty, that
“ I began to look on them with disgust. I began
“ to see such want of faith, of real honour, of truth,
“ in the generality of mankind ; that I began to
“ despise men in general. These combined reflec-
“ tions made me fly from what ceased to please
“ me, and to look out for something better.

“ At length, God came into my thoughts ;
“ and, as I had preserved the integrity of my
“ faith, I trusted in Him, that he would serve
“ me in my need, and fill up the void, which
“ my projected divorce from the creature must
“ necessarily occasion. In this darkness and con-
“ fusion, and without knowing what was to befall

“ me, I returned to the country. I made an effort
“ to read books, many of which I had never read,
“ and none of which I had ever relished. I
“ recalled to my mind all the truths of the gospel,
“ which I could recollect ; I fixed my attention on
“ them ; I felt their importance ; I began to per-
“ ceive that there was no real happiness, except in
“ believing the truths of salvation with a firm
“ faith, and putting them in practice. By repeat-
“ ing this, by repeatedly addressing myself to
“ Him, who alone could dispel my erroneous opi-
“ nions and erroneous affections, my heart was, at
“ length, touched ; my eyes were opened. I
“ resigned myself to my new impressions, and
“ resolved thenceforth to belong as much to God,
“ as, till then, I had belonged to the world. God
“ took me under his protection : it is surprising
“ how easily the obstacles in the way of my good
“ resolutions were removed. My first views did
“ not go very far ; solitude, prayer, reading, and
“ meditating on the gospel and the writings of the
“ fathers,—I looked for no more. But, in his
“ infinite mercy, Almighty God made me sensible,
“ that more was expected from me ; that this easy
“ tranquil life was not all, that God required from
“ a sinner, such as I had been ; from one, who
“ like me, had spent his whole youth, in the spirit,
“ the vanities, and the maxims of the world. I
“ found it to be his adorable will, that I should
“ bury myself in solitude and penance. Such is

“ my present state, and I live in the humble hope
“ of his accomplishing in me, the promises, which
“ he has made to those, who forsake all things for
“ the love of him.”

CHAP. VI.

State in which the Abbé de Rancé finds the Abbey de la Trappe.—He introduces into it Monks, from an adjoining Monastery, where the Cistercian Rule was strictly observed.

THE state, in which the abbé de Rancé found the monastery of la Trappe, in respect both to its spiritual and temporal concerns, was deplorable. It was founded in 1140, by Rotrou count of Perche. He placed in it some Benedictine monks, from the abbey of Savigny. Thirty-four years after its foundation, it received the Cistercian reformation ; and, for a considerable time, was eminent for the virtue of its pious inhabitants. By degrees, their fervour decayed. Of all the French provinces, Normandy, the Perche, and the Maine, suffered most by the wars between the French and English. The abbey de la Trappe repeatedly experienced the ravages of advancing and retreating armies ; and on one occasion, was plundered of every thing in it, which could be sold, carried away, or destroyed.

The monks displayed, in their distress, a noble

spirit of christian magnanimity. Determined to be a burthen on none, and relying on the divine protection, they resolved to remain in solitude, and trusted they should find the means of subsistence, in hard labour and extreme parsimony. But, being again visited by a plundering army, they were obliged to separate, and, during their separation, lost all their habits of regularity. At length, they returned to their abbey ; but very different from what they were, when they quitted it. They languished, for some time, in a state of extreme tepidity. Soon after the concordat between Leo the tenth and Francis the first, the abbey was given in commendam to the cardinal du Bellai. From that time, its disorders rapidly increased. The church, the dormitory, the refectory, fell to ruin ; six or seven monks formed the whole community ; they discontinued the service of the choir, and were too justly chargeable with a total neglect of every other religious duty.

On the abbé de Rancé's first arrival at the monastery, he was greatly struck with its gloomy appearance. All travellers, who have given a description of it, agree, that the monastery and its environs present a scene, which even the strongest mind cannot view without a sentiment of awe. At a small distance from the monastery, a dark forest encircles it on every side, and eleven lakes, the water of which is of a dismal hue, and always stagnant, form round it, in two circles, a double

moat. In a full sunshine, the abbey presents a venerable appearance ; but, at morning and evening, the exhalations from the lakes, leave nothing to be seen, but its towers, which, peering over the vapours, present both a fantastical and terrific appearance. The solemn stillness of the scenery completes its horror.

Such was the benefice, which the abbé de Rancé reserved to himself. He had heard of the disorders of the monks, and had reserved the abbey, in the hope of remedying them. When he had sounded their depth, he was terrified at what he beheld ; and was repeatedly tempted to abandon the undertaking : but he finally determined to persevere. From the whole tenor of his life, it appears, that in his boldest measures, he proceeded with due deliberation. The reader has seen the caution and measured steps, with which he advanced in the work of his own conversion ; he will see him pursue the same wise conduct, in his reformation of the abbey of la Trappe.

His first endeavour was to recommend himself generally to the monks, by polite attentions and kindness. To a certain extent, he succeeded ; but, when he mentioned reform, they intimated to him, that they would not endure it. He let them perceive, that he was determined on it ; they made no secret, of their being determined to go all lengths in opposing it ; and they held out threats, which they took care should reach him, that he had the

worst to fear from their personal violence. Then he assembled them in a body : he gave them the choice of submitting to the reform, or permitting him to introduce into the monastery, other religious members of the same order, by whom the rule should be observed. “ The king,” he told them, “ detested nothing so much, as persons of their “ character, who lived in open violation of their “ rule : he would take care, that the continued “ scandal of their lives should be properly repre- “ sented to his majesty ; and they themselves “ knew, that the consequences of such a represen- “ tation would be dreadful.” This had its weight with them : they declined submitting to the reform ; but consented to the introduction of a religious colony of monks from Perseigne, a neighbouring monastery of the Cistercian order, where the rule was strictly observed. Having, at his own expense, made the church, the refectory and the dormitory, fit for the reception of a sufficient number of them, the abbé de Rancé established, in the monastery, six monks from Perseigne : and the arrangement between the abbé and the old monks, was formally signed. The instrument bears date the 17th day of August 1662, and was recorded, in the following year, in the parliament of Paris.

CHAP. VII.

The Abbé de Rancé makes his Religious Profession in the Monastery of la Trappe, and becomes its regular Abbot.

As soon as the monks from Perseigne were settled in la Trappe, the abbé de Rancé regularly joined them in all their religious exercises: he was delighted with their modesty, abstemiousness and piety; and soon began to assist at their midnight devotions and observe their fasts. By degrees, his mode of life, except that he did not wear the religious habit, became the same as theirs. On the other hand, the monks became every day more attached to him; they were delighted to listen to him, to consult with him, to unbosom themselves to him, and to act, by his advice. He now experienced a happiness, which he had never felt; and he often thought, that he was called by God, to become a Cistercian monk. Something, however, of his early aversion to the cowl, continued: by degrees, it wore away, and he began to wish, that his entering into the order, was the holy will. But, before he took this important step, which was absolutely to decide the fate of his future life, he thought it prudent to consult with those, in whose opinions he principally confided. It was accordingly a subject of frequent discussion between him and the prelates, with whom he had advised, on his first conversion

to a religious life, and more particularly with father de Mouchy, his most confidential director on that occasion. At first, all of them were startled at the proposal, and thought it a hasty ebullition of zeal, but finally, all of them came over to the views of the abbé. He then proceeded further, by expressing a wish to resign the rank of abbot, and become a simple religious ; but this was opposed by all his advisers, on the ground, that he would deprive himself, by such a step, of the power of doing an infinity of good, both in his abbey, which though very regular, still wanted some reform, and in the Cistercian order at large, in which, as will be mentioned in a future page, the question of reform was, at that time, much agitated. Here the discussion closed, and the abbé de Rancé immediately repaired to the abbey de Perseigne, and was received into it, as a simple novice. He was then in his thirty-seventh year.

No distinction was made between him and an ordinary novice ; so that he immediately had to undergo all the severities of the Cistercian order. His constitution, naturally delicate, sunk under them ; and, at the end of some weeks, he was seized with an illness, from which the worst was apprehended. But his mind was unsubdued : by degrees, he recovered from his illness, and was restored to perfect health. His obedience, humility and piety, edified the whole convent, and obtained their universal respect.

Such was the esteem, in which he was held by his superior, that some troubles taking place, at this time, in a Cistercian convent in Champagne, the abbé de Rancé, though a novice, was directed to repair to it, in order to restore peace and harmony among the monks, and establish a general reform in the monastery. The malecontents were supported by the neighbouring gentry; and it was universally thought that much violent opposition would be made to the abbé; but the good sense and conciliating manner, in which he proceeded, won to him many hearts, and, in a few days, every thing was settled to the satisfaction of all parties. His success induced his superiors to order him, on a similar mission, to other convents: but he respectfully declined it; and, by his earnest intreaties, persuaded them to leave him to complete, in the usual silence and solitude, the term of his noviciate.

The term of it being expired, it remained for him to take possession of the monastery, as its regular abbot: but for that, a licence of the king was necessary. It was obtained, with some difficulty; and he was blessed in the cathedral church of Sééz, the monastery of la Trappe being within the jurisdiction of the bishop of that see. The ceremony was performed on the 13th day of July 1664, by Oliver Plunket, the bishop of Armagh in Ireland, who, at that time, happened to be at Sééz.

CHAP. VIII.

The Abbé de la Trappe is deputed to Rome, to solicit the General Reform, then in agitation, of the Cistercian Order.

THE abbé de la Trappe hoped to be permitted to pass the remainder of his life, in prayer, and the practice of penance, within the walls of his monastery: but, very soon after he took possession of it, he was deputed to Rome, on business of general importance to the Cistercian order.

A project for its reform was, at that time, in agitation. During the two hundred years, which immediately followed its institution, the Cistercian order retained its first fervour. By degrees it degenerated so far, that many respectable princes solicited Innocent the eighth for its suppression. Dom Denys de l'Argentier, abbot of the monastery of Clairvaux, attempted to effect a general reform in it, and his attempts were countenanced by Dom Nicholas Boucherat, the abbot of Citeaux: but they were opposed by the general body of the order, so that the reform was confined to the abbey of Clairvaux, and a very few other monasteries. The want, however, of a general reform of the order, being felt very generally, Lewis the thirteenth, in 1662, obtained from pope Gregory the fifteenth, a bull, which authorized the cardinal de la Roche-Foucaud, to reform all the ancient religious orders

of France. In this important and delicate commission, the cardinal appears to have proceeded with great prudence; some of the monasteries, received the reform: but it was opposed by a great majority of them. This caused a division in the order: the religious of the monasteries, which received the reform, were said to be of the strict observance, those, who belonged to the monasteries, which did not receive the reform, were said to be of the common observance. The parties having appealed to the pope, the abbé de la Trappe was deputed to his holiness, by the strict observants, to advocate their cause.

Both during his journey and during his stay at Rome, the abbé de la Trappe, strictly adhered to the rule of his order. He observed all the abstinence and fasts prescribed by it: said mass every day; and, as far as circumstances permitted, said the office of the church at the conventual hours. With the exception of places of singular devotion, he never visited any of the public edifices, or went to see any of the curiosities, with which Rome abounds. In the coldest climates, through which he passed, he never used any extraordinary covering, and, in the hottest transalpine countries, constantly wore his full habit. He drank no other liquor than water, and generally dined on bread and herbs. With the exception of some visits, which he was absolutely obliged to receive and return, and his necessary attendance on his holiness,

on persons in office, and some persons of power and influence, whom he was bound to conciliate to his cause, he was always at home, or in some retired church.

In the management of the business, on which he was sent, he displayed great wisdom and firmness ; and the general mildness of his manners was universally admired : but he was unsuccessful ; the religious of the common observance prevailed, and a brief was issued in their favour. This gave him equal surprise and concern : “ Does then “ Rome herself,” he said to cardinal Bona, “ support a religious order in its degeneracy ? Does “ Rome sanction the Cistercians, in swerving from “ their rule ? in their ceasing to imitate St. Bernard ? ” — “ Rome,” replied the good cardinal, “ is as desirous, as yourself, of the complete reform “ of the Cistercian, and every other religious order, “ which has not preserved the spirit of its founder. “ But Rome sees and hears more than you, and “ judges it prudent to tolerate much imperfection, “ rather than provoke, by an untimely reform, the “ chance of a much greater evil. Before Rome “ issues a decree in favour of the reform, she must “ consider how it will be received : there is much “ reason to fear great resistance to it, from many “ powerful quarters. The French ambassador has “ convinced the pope, that it is not favoured by “ the king. After receiving this intimation, you “ must think it would be unwise in the pope to

“ countenance it.”—However this discourse might convince the abbé de la Trappe, of the prudence of the pope’s proceeding, it did not alleviate his concern for the failure of the measure ; but, finding that his stay could no longer be of use to the cause, on which he was sent, he returned to his monastery.

He was the more anxious to reach it, as, in his absence a circumstance occurred, which gave him great uneasiness. The prior had attempted to introduce some relaxation into the monastery ; the religious generally resisted the attempt. The abbé de la Trappe approved and commended their resistance, but thought that, in the manner, in which they had proceeded, there had been some want of charity and humility. On this subject, he addressed to them a letter ; the purport of which was to imprint deeply on their minds, the necessity of practising those virtues ; and a rooted conviction, that, where those virtues are absent, there is nothing good.

Though it be anticipating the order of events, it seems proper in this place to lead the reader to the close of this controversy, so far as it particularly concerned the abbé de la Trappe. As soon as the pope’s brief was received in France, the abbé of Citeaux convened a general chapter of the Cistercian order. After some opposition from the abbé de la Trappe and the other abbots, who favoured the reform, the brief was received. It provided, that the monasteries, which had received,

or in future should receive the reform, might retain it; but they were to be subject, in the same manner, as if it had not taken place, to the superiors, and other functionaries of the order. They were, however, allowed visitors of their own. Great commendations were bestowed on the strict observance, and the superiors were enjoined to protect it.

Thus, something was gained for the strict observance. The discussion to which the brief gave rise, made many of the monks of the common observance, sensible, that, in the monasteries, in which that prevailed, the rule of St. Benedict was not practised in its true spirit. It is a general rule of monastic discipline, that a religious of one monastery may remove to any other, where the rule of his order is more strictly observed. On the strength of this rule, several religious of the common observance applied for admission, and were received into la Trappe. This gave umbrage to the superiors of the monasteries which they quitted; and they appeared to have just cause of complaint against it, on this ground, that the monks, who applied for admission into la Trappe, being in general, the most edifying members of the community which they left, it often happened, that, by their secession, the monastery lost its most valuable members, and was bereft of all the benefit, which it derived from their talents, their counsels, and the example of their virtues. This was represented to

pope Innocent the eleventh, and a brief was obtained from his holiness, which enjoined the abbé de la Trappe not to receive the religious of any other house into his monastery, without a particular permission from the holy see. On the receipt of this brief, the abbé de la Trappe wrote a letter to the pope, giving him a particular account of what he had done and was doing, in order to introduce, into his monastery, the true spirit of the rule of Citeaux, and requested the permission of the holy see to establish in it, a claustral prior of the strict observance, who, if the monastery should again fall into commendam, might regulate its spiritual concerns, according to the projected reform. This, the pope, by a letter addressed to the abbé, readily granted. His holiness expressed in it, his full approbation of the reform, which the abbé de la Trappe had effected in his monastery ; and, in the most honourable and kindest terms, gave his blessing to him and his community. He also caused it to be intimated to the abbé, that, when any monk should apply to the holy see, for leave to remove from his own monastery into that of la Trappe, the leave would be easily granted.

CHAP. IX.

*Commencement of the Reform of the Monastery
of la Trappe.*

As the change of the monastery of la Trappe, from great monastic irregularity to the highest degree of monastic perfection, is one of the most instructive and edifying events in the ecclesiastical history of modern times, a particular account of the steps, by which it was effected, will probably be expected in these pages.

Nothing perhaps facilitated the introduction of it more, than that the monks beheld, in the person, by whom it was introduced, one, who had himself left all things to follow Christ, and who was therefore particularly qualified to preach his doctrines. "The first condition," says the incomparable Bourdaloue, "which is required in an apostle or
"preacher of the Gospel, is, that he should be
"dead to the world and himself. Had not St.
"Francis Xavier every advantage which the world
"can bestow? Was he not of the first nobility of
"Navarre? Had he not distinguished himself in
"the university of Paris? Did he not possess ex-
"traordinary talents? Would he not have excelled
"in any profession, which he embraced? All this
"is true: but nothing of all this contributed to
"the miraculous conversions, which the Almighty

“ worked by the hands of St. Francis Xavier.
“ No ! To the success of his labours, in the propa-
“ gation of the Gospel, it was necessary that he
“ should strip himself of all this : that he should
“ renounce all that was his own ; that he should
“ forget all he knew. It was by this annihilation
“ of himself, that he converted whole nations to
“ God.”—A like annihilation of himself, the monks
perceived in the abbé de la Trappe. He had distributed all his property among the poor ; he had abjured human learning ; he had embraced a life of poverty : thus he had become a true disciple of the cross ; and thus, in his mouth, the language of the cross had unspeakable grace, and his hearers readily believed that God had sent him among them for their good.

It added to the force of his instructions, that he never preached what he himself did not practise. Speaking generally, the abbots, even of the best regulated monasteries, had spacious apartments, kept a separate table, had an equipage, were attended by a retinue of servants, received and paid visits, spent a considerable portion of their time out of their monastery, and absented themselves frequently from a great part of the service of the choir. The abbé de la Trappe refused himself all these privileges. With the exception of a small cell, a small room for the reception of the monks, who wished to speak to him, and some rooms for strangers, he entirely gave up the apartments, which

he might have claimed for his private use ; he always took his meals in the public refectory, and had exactly the same portion of food, as the other monks. He kept no servant, and permitted no lay-brother to attend him. After his return from Rome, he never quitted the monastery, except on three occasions ;—when he attended a chapter of the order ; when he made the visitation of a convent, which depended on the abbey of la Trappe ; and when he paid his respects to a bishop of his diocese, upon his election. He never absented himself from the choir ; and, after he had established the practice of manual labour, he was, for several years, as diligent and regular in the exercise of it, as the other monks. Thus he constantly lived in the midst of his monks, and shared, in common with them, all the hardships and privations, to which he exhorted them to submit.

Every part of his reform he effected by degrees ; and never introduced any new practice of devotion or austerity, without convincing the monks of its propriety ; and seldom, without leading them to propose it. His first measure of reform, was to have a spiritual book read in the refectory, while the monks were at their meals. He took care, that the books thus read, should be the lives of the ancient fathers of the desert, or of the founders of religious orders, or some other book, which should tend to instil into the minds of the monks, the true spirit of a religious life, and excite them to a

holy emulation of those, in whose steps he wished them to tread.

His next step was, to banish, from the hours of recreation, all boisterous mirth, and from their common intercourse, too much familiarity. Every christian, he used to observe to his monks, is an image of Christ, and should therefore be approached with respect. By this, he produced in the monks, a general gravity and mildness of manner, which, of itself, disposed them to recollection. Afterwards, he proceeded to banish all kind of profane reading, from the monastery; and then, having made the monks sensible that they had embraced a monastic life, not to become learned and acquire renown, but to obtain contrite hearts, and to die to themselves, he banished, from the monastery, the study of theology. He caused the midnight service to be regularly attended, and the whole service to be sung slowly and distinctly, in a firm and high tone of voice, and every monk, without exception, to join in it.

It must be added, that, it was his uniform study, to conciliate the affection and confidence of the monks. At all hours, they had access to him, and he always took care to receive them in such a manner, as persuaded them, that he was pleased with their calling on him, and wished their stay. In their illness, he was particularly attentive to them, and often watched whole nights by them. He was always on his guard to shew no preference

to any one of them. It is admitted, that they were all singularly attached to him, and that their confidence in him was unbounded.

There seldom were fewer than between two hundred and two hundred and fifty inmates in the monastery of la Trappe. They were classed under three different descriptions :—*the monks*, properly speaking : they wore a white woollen dress ;—*the lay brothers*, who took the same vows, and followed the same rules as the monks, but transacted the temporal concerns, and did the menial duties of the monastery : they were distinguished by a grey gown and cape ;—the third class were, *the Frères Donnés* or brothers, who gave themselves up for a time to the house. They did not belong to the order ; but were religious persons, who, by their tender years, or, what was much more frequently the case, by their advanced age, were incapable of the austerities of the order, but wished to conform to its rules as far as their case admitted. They made a private vow of obedience to the superior, to be binding on them for one year ; at the end of it, they were at liberty to quit the order, and the superior was at liberty to dismiss them : but it was understood, on both sides, when they made their vows, that they meant to persevere in their state, to the end of their lives. Unless it was supposed that they had such a resolution, they were not permitted to make the vow.—Besides these three classes, many persons, even of the highest rank of

life, occasionally visited the monastery, and remained in it for weeks or months, for the purposes of prayer and meditation.

CHAP. 'X.

*The Abbé de la Trappe introduces a further
Reform into the Monastery.*

AFTER he had effected the reform, which we have mentioned, the abbé paused ;—and abstained, for some time, from attempting to involve it higher. He wished that his monks should become sensible of the comfort, which they experienced in the pious regularity, which he had established. It had driven merriment from them, but had introduced, among them, the serene joy of pious habits ; it had prevented many an exchange of idle words, but had substituted, in their stead, many holy thoughts ; it had subjected them to countless self-denials, and incessant mortification of their own wills ; but had given them contrite and humble hearts, which knew the value of penance, and made it welcome. Thus, in the midst of their austerities, the peace of God dwelt among them ; they had obtained from heaven, the gift, so rarely merited, of a love of the cross ; and, while from day to day, it increased their happiness, it increased, in an equal degree, the desire of the means, however repugnant to

human nature, by which that happiness was produced.

With these dispositions, the abbé had often more need of the bridle than the spur, in directing their penitential course. On one occasion, they petitioned his leave to observe Lent, by taking on each day, one single meal at four o'clock, to consist of nothing but bread and herbs. This was the ancient mode of observing Lent, in the order of Citeaux. For a long time, the abbé would not grant their request ; but, at length, yielded to it. The event shewed he had good reason for his hesitation ; as half of them were more dead than alive, before the ensuing Easter Sunday. They were not, however, disheartened ; but, with the abbé's consent, equally reluctantly given, made the same attempt in the following Lent, and suffered from it equally. After this, they submitted their fasting impulses to the abbé's regulation, but still, with a wish for much stricter fasts than he enjoined.

It has been mentioned, that, in the early stage of the reform, the abbé de la Trappe banished all kind of familiarity from the monks, and made them, on all occasions, address one another, both with the look and language of respect. This immediately delivered the monastery from a great quantity of unnecessary talk. By degrees, he reduced the time, when conversation was allowed, to a very small space ; and, at last, excluded conversation altogether. He even excluded all communication

between the monks, either by look or sign; and, except in the church, the chapter, or the refectory, he allowed no monk, where the service or duty of the house did not require it, to place himself near another. If they met, they bowed; but avoided looking at each other, keeping their eyes fixed on the ground. Imperious necessity alone could justify the slightest infringement of these injunctions of silence and solitude, without the superior's express leave. On some occasion, a monk perceived, that, by the mistake of one of the monks, who were engaged in copying a church service, all the copies would be wrong, and the whole transcription spoilt. In a few low words, he apprised the religious of the mistake. The superior, notwithstanding the necessity, which appeared to justify this breach of silence, pronounced it an infraction of the rule, and put the monk into severe penance. So great was the respect for silence, that if, in the refectory, a monk dropped or spilled any thing, however unintentionally, he instantly prostrated himself on the ground, and remained there, till the superior bade him rise. The only exception, if it can be justly called an exception, to this unbroken silence, was during one hour on Sunday. Then the monks were assembled in community, and those, who felt inclined, might make a religious discourse on any religious subject, they thought proper: but all gesticulation and oratorical flourishing was to be avoided; and those, who used it, were penanced.

It is observable, that the abbé de la Trappe set

so high a value on the practice of absolute silence, that, being asked, which of all his regulations, conducted most to the religious perfection of the community, he assigned, without hesitation, the first place to silence ; and declared he would part with all the others, rather than give up that article of his reform.

After the abbé had established this rigid silence and solitude in the monastery, he effected, without much difficulty, the great object of his views—a total separation of the religious from their families, their friends, and the whole world.

Every monk, on his profession, wrote a letter to his family, informing them of the event, and bidding them, for this life, a perpetual farewell. After this, no personal intercourse, no intercourse by letter, no communication direct or indirect, of any kind, was allowed between the monk and his friends, or his family, or even between the monk and his parents. When a parent, or other near relation of any monk died, the abbot announced to the community, that a parent, brother, or sister, or other relative, as the case might be, of a member of the community, was dead ; and he requested the community to pray for the soul of the deceased. Nothing further was intimated on the subject. No public news was permitted to reach the monks. For several years after it happened, the death of Lewis the fourteenth was known, in the monastery, to the abbot only.

But this estrangement of the monks from the

creature, did not stop here. Not satisfied with excluding them from the world at large, the abbé contrived, that they should be almost entire strangers to each other. When a monk entered the community, his name was never mentioned ; or any information given, respecting him, or his family ; and so much of the face of every monk was concealed by his cowl, that it was almost impossible for another monk to recognize his features. Thus, it sometimes happened, that intimate friends, and even near relations, lived together in the monastery, for several years, without knowing it. A monk, a few hours before his death, mentioned to the abbot, his concern for a brother, whom he had left, leading an irregular life in the world. Without making any answer, the abbot ordered a particular monk into the sick room, and when he had entered it, ordered him to uncover his head. As soon as he had uncovered it, the sick monk recognized the brother, concerning whom he had been so solicitous, and who, without either of their knowing it, had been a monk in the monastery, during many years. Accident, however, sometimes produced a discovery. A young man entered into the monastery, was professed, and after some years of the most edifying piety, fell into a decline, and died. A monk, considerably his senior, attended him in his illness, and after his death, regularly visited the cemetery, and, in silent grief, prayed over his tomb. This continued during several years. At length,

the old monk died ; he was buried near the other ; and a stone, placed over his grave, informed the community, that he had thus mourned over an only son. They had lived in the monastery many years, without discovering their relationship. In the infirmary, each had recognized the other, but each of them concealed from the other, his recognition of him.

One of the first cares of the abbé de la Trappe was to establish, among his monks, the practice of bodily labour. “ God,” he observed to them, “ enjoined the cultivation of the earth to man, “ while he was innocent, as a means of preserving “ his innocence ; he commanded it to him, after “ his fall, as the means of recovering it. All the “ founders of monastic orders, were aware of this “ command, and knew how much the observance “ of it conduced to the practice of the evangelical “ counsels ; and therefore, in all their rules, enjoined the practice of it. There is not a single “ monastic rule, in which, the injunction of it is “ omitted. It mortifies the body, humbles the “ soul, and, when it is performed in the true spirit “ of penance, unites the soul to God.” Twice, every day, the monks assembled for their manual labour. They were first drawn up in a regular line ; then, after a short prayer, the abbot gave the signal, and they proceeded to the labour assigned them. Care was taken, that it should be hard and fatiguing. It was aggravated by the dampness of

the country, and the inclemency of its climate, in which the extremes of heat and cold often prevail. It continued for an hour and a half, in the morning, and for the same space of time in the afternoon. As the monks generally worked in the open air, their habits were often wetted through, with rain or snow ; and, when the sun was out, they were often in the same state of wet, from their perspiration, which was the greater, on account of the weakness to which they were reduced by their austerities, and which made the slightest exertion a fatigue to them. But they were never permitted to change their inner habits ; and thus, in the state we have mentioned, they frequently slept the whole night. They were forbidden to do any thing, by which their labour could be lessened or rendered less painful. The abbot penanced a monk, for putting aside some nettles, which stung him, while he was weeding.

The pious gravity, with which they performed their spiritual exercises, was equally discernible in them, while they performed their task of bodily labour. The prior of the Benedictine congregation of St. Maur, seeing them return from it, fell on his knees, supposing, from their look of recollection and prayer, that they were following the blessed sacrament in procession.

In very severe cold, they were allowed a fire, in a public room, but not to sit down or to continue in the room, more than a quarter of an hour,

The abbe was not less attentive to mortify the minds of the religious. With this view, he established the custom of holding, every day, a chapter of the community. All the monks were required to attend it. The abbot sat in a stall : over it, there was a crucifix : he was covered ; the monks stood, in two rows, uncovered. Each of them was expected to mention any deviation from the strict observance of the rule, which he had remarked in any of his brethren : but they much oftener proclaimed their own faults. These were almost always very slight, but, slight as they might be, they were punished by the most humiliating rebukes, long prostrations, or by severe disciplines, which they were enjoined to inflict on themselves. The chapter was concluded by an exhortation from the abbot. He laid before the monks, the dangers of the world, from which the Almighty had been pleased to deliver them ; the advantages of solitude, and the blessings of penance ; he filled their hearts, with terror of the divine judgments, and pious desires of a happy eternity, and generally read to them a chapter of the rule of St. Benedict ; always taking care to impress on their minds, that, austere as it might be thought, the reform, which he wished to establish among them, was less austere, than the rule of St. Benedict, in its original purity.

But his efforts to effect this mortification of their minds, were not confined to the chapter. “ His

“ whole life,” says Marsollièr, “ was occupied in
“ destroying self-love in himself and the monks
“ committed to his care. At all times, in every
“ occurrence, in all places, for the slightest seem-
“ ing reasons, he humbled, reprovèd and penanced
“ them. Some persons of enlightened piety.
“ thought he carried this too far. The monks
“ themselves thought differently. Jesus Christ,
“ humbled, covered with ignominy, was always
“ before their eyes. Looking up to that great
“ model, they thought the abbot spared them
“ too much, and did not sufficiently punish
“ them.”

It is needless to say, that the abbé de la Trappe encouraged, in his monks, a spirit of prayer. On ordinary days, eight hours and a half, and on solemn festivals, a longer space was dedicated, to this pious exercise ; but it was the abbé's particular endeavour that, in all their prayer and meditation, the monks should adhere to the most simple and common methods, and cautiously abstain from those efforts at sublimer devotion, by which pious souls are too often deluded. Every thing we read of them, shews, that their prayer was both continual and fervent ; but it never savoured of refinement, and, in all the agiography of la Trappe, a single instance of mystical excess, or even of mystical prayer, is not recorded. The total abstraction of the monks from all sublunary things, makes this the more remarkable. Bossuet, during his controversy with

Fenelon, advised, on the subject of the dispute, with the abbé de Rancé : we have his answer. In the strongest terms, he reprobates in it, the tendency to mystical excesses, which Fenelon, unknown to himself, had introduced into some of his writings : and exhorts Bossuet, to exert all his powers, in the defence of common and approved prayer ; and, in guarding the faithful against the illusion of higher spirituality. From this, the spirit of humility, which the abbé de la Trappe, constantly inculcated to his monks, greatly contributed to withhold them. Far from endeavouring to penetrate the cloud with Moses, or to be admitted into the cellar, of the Great King, (such are the expressions of mystical writers), the monk of la Trappe aimed at no more, than to offer his prayer with the humble publican in the lowest part of the temple, or to fall, with the prodigal, at the feet of his offended, but merciful father.

The result of this well-regulated spirit of piety was, that, in the two great commandments, on which all the law and the prophets depend, the monks of la Trappe have not been often surpassed.— In the discipline of the house, every thing yielded to fraternal love, and no penances were so heavy, as those inflicted for a breach of this duty. Such penances, however, were seldom wanted ; the monks behaved to one another with respect ; but the respect, which each of them shewed to the others, was much exceeded by the real reverence and

affection, which he bore to them. Each sought the most unpleasant part of the work of the house ; each strove to ease his brethren of it ; if any thing was wrong, each wished the whole blame and the whole penance for it to fall upon him. Thus was the great precept of charity, as it regards the love of one's neighbour, practised *within* the walls of la Trappe.

As to the *external* practice of it ;—What the biographers of its pious inhabitants relate, of the charitable administration of the revenue of the monastery, is most edifying. All the revenue, except what was absolutely necessary for the subsistence of the monks and the support of the buildings, was expended on the poor. Twice, in every week, a pound of bread, and a portion of dried peas, were given to every poor person, by whom they were solicited ; and frequently, in hard seasons, more than four thousand poor persons were maintained by the monastery, from the beginning of Lent, till the time of harvest. Large alms were given to families in distress, and to poor curates ; and many young men, who shewed dispositions for learning and piety, were educated at public schools, at the expence of the monastery. Others were apprenticed, or taught mechanic employments. Towards the end of the year 1696, France was afflicted with such a general scarcity of the fruits of the earth, that several died of hunger. On that occasion, there was no limit to the charitable exertions of the

monastery. In the beginning of November, money or food was given to all the poor, who presented themselves to receive them. At first, the number of the poor was between two and three hundred; it increased gradually; at Christmas, it amounted to fourteen hundred; and, from that time, till the following July, the same regular distribution of charity was continued. It must be added, that the sick in the neighbourhood of the monastery, were supplied, at its expence, with medicines, and medical advice. The rules of the monastery thus express the precept of charity: “ Great care should be taken
“ to relieve the poor; the custom, of giving them
“ bread in the public rooms, should be preserved.
“ If any of them are particularly destitute, a crown,
“ or half a pistole, may be given them. But this
“ only respects the wandering and strange poor :
“ for, in regard to the poor of the country, those
“ who live in the neighbourhood of the monastery,
“ no measure of charity is prescribed. They must
“ be assisted, as far as the resources of the monas-
“ tery will permit, to the utmost of their want :
“ it is the duty of the butler, to make particular
“ exertions to discover them.”—Thus within and without the walls of the monastery of la Trappe, was the divine precept of love, so far as it respects the duty of loving one’s neighbour as one’s self; always observed by its holy inmates.

Their love of God was shewn in the manner which Christ had declared to be its true test—

a persevering discharge of the duties commanded or counselled by the gospel.

It has been mentioned that, when the abbé de la Trappe, after his first spiritual retreat, returned to his house at Virèt, and beheld the comfort and elegance, with which it abounded, and felt how contrary the appearance of every thing about it was to the injunctions of the gospel, he exclaimed, “ Either the gospel is true, or this is the house of
“ a reprobate.”—How different must have been his sentiments when, after completing his reform, he surveyed la Trappe and its holy community. He might then justly exclaim, “ Either the gospel
“ is false, or this is a house of saints! They
“ have taken up the cross; they deny themselves,
“ and they follow the steps of Him, who died
“ upon it.”

It remains to give some account of the regular *Distribution of Time*, in the monastery.

Except on Sundays or festivals, the monks rose at two in the morning: On Sundays and such festivals, as are not of particular solemnity, they rose at one: on festivals of particular solemnity, they rose at midnight.

As soon as they rose, they sung *mattins* and *lauds*. Those, and the other parts of the church service, they sung in a high and firm tone of voice; making pauses in the middle and at the end of every verse and response. All the monks were required to sing, and they sung in such perfect unison, that

their united voices appeared a single voice. This produced a surprising effect on the hearers. After mattins and lauds, they remained in the church, and employed themselves in their private devotions till four : then, they retired from the church, and, in a public room of the community, some book of pious instruction was read to them, till five.

At five, they returned to the church, and sung the hour of *prime* : after prime, the chapter was held, and they were employed, in different spiritual exercises, till seven.

At seven, they proceeded to their manual labour—it ended between eight and nine : then, they assembled in the church, sung the hour of *tierce*, assisted at a solemn high mass, and, after it, sung the hour of *sext*.

At ten, they repaired to the refectory, to take their first meal. It consisted of a portion of brown and coarse bread ; of a soup, consisting of onions, cabbages, or some other garden-stuff, boiled together, without butter, but with just as much milk, as served to whiten it : they had also a portion of herbs, roots and lentiles. The whole furnished a meal, sufficiently nutritious, but, to persons unaccustomed to it, very unpalatable. On grand festivals, a little cheese, hyssop and salt, were added to their soup. No linen was spread over the table, but every monk had a napkin, a fork, a spoon, a cup of earthenware, containing his portion of cyder, the only liquor, except pure water, and the

milk that coloured their soup, which the monks of la Trappe were allowed. The cleanliness of the refectory, and of every article used at the meals of the community, could not be surpassed. During the meals, the doors of the house were shut, and the whole community was in the refectory. A pious book was read : and, if any monk thought he had offended, however unintentionally, against silence or the prescribed decorum of the refectory, he moved slowly from his seat, and prostrated himself on the floor, till the abbot, by a sign, ordered him to return to his place.

At a quarter of an hour before twelve, the monks returned to their cells. They were very small : a table, a chair, a crucifix, a human skull, a bed of bare boards, composed the whole of their furniture : they reposed on it from twelve till one.

At one, they assembled in the church to sing the hour of *none* ; then, they returned to their second task of manual labour, which ended at three. From three till four, they were employed at different devotional exercises in the church, or in a common room, or in the open air. From four till five, they sung *vespers*, and said other prayers. Then, they took their second meal, much more sparing than the first. Afterwards, they were employed, on other spiritual reading till *complin*, which was sung at seven. At eight, they returned to rest. They slept in a public dormitory, divided into something like cells, by separate partitions : These partitioned

inclosures were the only cells of the monks of la Trappe,

The use of linen, even in the severest illness, was not allowed them. Their habit was of coarse wool. During the church service, they wore an upper garment; at their work, they wore one of a different kind; but they never changed their inner garment.

Such was the ordinary life of a monk of la Trappe. It was almost a constant fast: but the fast was aggravated on the fasting days of the church or the order. On those days, their first meal was delayed till noon; no butter was allowed in their soup, and a trifling portion of bread only, composed their second meal.

Meat, and eggs, were never permitted them, except in sickness; and then only, when the sickness was extreme: fish they never ate.

The instances of their heroic fortitude under pain, if not so well attested as they are, would seem incredible. Though they appear to us beings of a superior order, and therefore above human sensations, yet the perusal of their patient suffering is often too distressing to endure. One of them, owing to intense labour, had suffered from the rheumatism, till a mortification on his back and shoulders took place. Although a wound had existed for two years, yet not a word of complaint escaped his lips; nor did he, by any gesture, indicate the exquisite torture he endured, from the

rough woollen garment, which he wore next to his skin. At length, the blood oozing through it betrayed the torture he strove to conceal. A surgeon was then sent for. On examination, the mortification had proceeded so far, that it was impossible to save his life, but by actually cutting off the flesh to the very quick, so as to lay his bones entirely bare. The surgeon pronounced it a most painful operation. He desired the monk might be tied, as nothing else could enable him to endure it. The patient replied with a look of deep humility and thankfulness, "Of myself I could not bear it, but " God, I trust, will enable me." The patient accordingly sat down, and the operation began: none of the assistants could refrain from tears. The holy man did not once change countenance; the same peace and composure sate upon his features. The surgeon was perfectly astonished: he told the abbé de Rancé, who was by, that the torture, which the patient underwent, was so great, that the effort he made to refrain from groaning, was sufficient to kill him on the spot, and that he must sink under it. The abbé de Rancé commanded the monk to give way to his feelings. The poor man raised his eyes, with a look of exquisite suffering, but yet with a benignant, peaceful joy, and said, " That " through the mercy of God, his soul was kept in " perfect peace: that he had never had such a view " of the goodness of God in the extremity of the " Saviour's sufferings; that he was favoured with

“ such an inexpressible sense of the depth of his
 “ love, that he found as much difficulty in refrain-
 “ ing from tears of joy and songs of thanksgiving,
 “ as he thought he should have found in refraining
 “ from groans.” Then, with a fervent voice, and
 clasping his hands together, he added, “ O ! the
 “ unsearchable depth of the riches of the love of
 “ God in Christ.” So saying, he fell back, and
 expired.

The only practice, which had even the appearance of relaxation, was their conferences. When these were announced, they proceeded to a particular spot in an adjoining forest.—The following inscription was written on a board, fastened to one of the trees :

“ Seigneur, que je me plains, a l'ombre de ces bois,
 “ Ou j'entens sans cesse, resonner a mes oreilles,
 “ Des oiseaux les plus douces voix,
 “ Qui chantent a l'envie les plus rares merveilles :
 “ Mais hélas ! que je suis confus ;
 “ Quand je vois ces chenes battus
 “ Par les vents, qui leur font la guerre,
 “ Malgré tous leur efforts, s'élever jusqu' aux cieux ;
 “ Et que ma foible cœur se presente a tes yeux,
 “ Lâchement rempant sur la terre.”

“ O Lord ! how am I delighted, with the shade
 “ of these woods ; where I hear the sweetest voices
 “ of the birds incessantly resounding thy wonders !
 “ But, alas ! how confounded am I, when I con-
 “ sider, that these oaks, though beaten by the
 “ winds which assail them, still raise their heads

“ to the heavens ; while my weak heart is seen by thee, ever meanly grovelling on the earth.”

From what has been said, the reader will see, that the monks of la Trappe differed from all religious orders in this respect, that one hour during the day, was the only portion of time, which they were allowed to spend in their cells. All the rest of their time was spent in the church, the public room, or the open air, with the community.—Thus their separate existence was, in some manner, taken from them.

In their illness, nothing was omitted to prepare them for a happy eternity. As soon as their near approach to death was perceived, a bed of ashes and straw, was prepared for them, on the ground. They were gently moved upon it, a crucifix was put into their hands, they held it to their breast, and in this attitude generally expired.

The abbé de Rancé, and Dom le Nain, a brother of Tillemont, the celebrated church historian, and for some time sub-prior of the monastery of la Trappe, have published an account of the dying moments of many of its monks and lay-brothers. The resignation to the will of God, the confidence in his mercy, the humble hope of a blessed eternity, which these holy men shew, at that awful moment, are most edifying. Stern, indeed, must be the person, who can peruse, the relations of them, without tears. However the reader may wish to live, he certainly must wish to be as resigned and

happy, in his last moments, as the monks of la Trappe.

But it must be observed, that, the monks themselves were always convinced, that the most favoured of worldlings might envy them their happiness, even in the present life. It was visible to strangers. In the general appearance of the monks, their years spent in the practice of mortification and penance were very visible ; but in all of them, there was a look of serene piety and holy joy, which captivated all, who beheld them, and attracted both their veneration and love : those, who examined them most attentively, were most sensible of their happiness. They were buried in their habits, and in the very shoes, which they wore on the straw on which they breathed their last. They had no coffin ; nothing intervened between them and the earth, that covered their remains.

Such were the austerities of the monks of la Trappe. Being once asked, why he enjoined so many austerities, which were practised by no other religious order, the venerable abbé modestly replied, “ I, by no means, think them practices to be
“ adopted by all ; yet, I dare not aver, that they
“ may be safely neglected by us. Only the great
“ doctrines of the gospel are essential to all, *collectively* ; yet, no doubt, an attention to his own
“ particular call, is equally essential to each, *individually*. I can give the right hand of fellowship,
“ or rather sit at the feet of all, who work in the

“ vineyard of Christ. Whether they are called to
 “ missions, as the Jesuits ; to acts of mercy, as the
 “ order of la Charité ; to enlighten the world, as
 “ the congregation of St. Maur ; to preach, like
 “ the Dominicans ; to humiliations, as the Minimi ;
 “ or to contemplation, as the order of the Visita-
 “ tion, I still honour the work of God in them all.
 “ Unto all of them, grace is given according to
 “ the measure of the gift of Christ. Yet, as we
 “ are all called to be living members of the church
 “ of Christ, which is joined and compacted by
 “ that, which every joint supplieth, no one can
 “ safely neglect his own particular call. *I believe*
 “ *it is our particular call, to shew to the christian*
 “ *world, that, as every worldly good, without*
 “ *God, is empty : so God, without any worldly*
 “ *good, is, as of old, all-sufficient.*”

CHAP. XI.

*The Hospitality practised at the monastery of
la Trappe.*

HOSPITALITY was one of the fundamental rules
 of the Benedictine order. In the present state of
 society, when roads are so good, inns so comfort-
 able, the passage from one end of the kingdom to
 another so speedy, and employments for the indus-
 trious and active, so numerous, hospitality, as it was

formerly practised by monasteries, is not wanted, and might, perhaps, be an encouragement to idleness : but, during the middle ages, when roads were few and bad, when no inns existed, except in considerable towns, when travelling was both dangerous and slow, and military duty was almost the only occupation of life, the hospitality of a monastery contributed essentially to the comfort of a large proportion of individuals. It protected travellers, supplied food and raiment to the poor, and, by facilitating intercourse, diffused information, and extended the beneficial influence of learning and religion. With this view, it was strongly recommended by St. Benedict, and practised by his disciples. The forms of it varied, with the times and places, in which it existed ; but it was never practised, in a more pleasing or religious manner, than in the monastery of la Trappe.

“ It was,” says Marsollièr, “ one of the first
“ cares of the abbé de la Trappe, to restore in his
“ monastery, the primitive practice of hospitality.
“ Nothing in the monastery is more edifying,
“ than the reception of guests : charity, humility,
“ neatness, care and attention, cannot be carried
“ further. The guests are boarded and lodged,
“ without any inquiry who they are, or whence
“ they come. Absolute strangers, those, who have
“ given cause of complaint to the monastery, persons,
“ whose looks or dress, would shut every
“ other gate against them, are received in

“ la Trappe with all the respect, that is shewn to intimate friends or persons of distinction. It should seem to be the object of the holy community, to restore, among mankind, the equality, which God originally established among men, and sin banished from them : all the guests are served with the same respect and attention. Two religious, and many of the Frères Donnés, are destined to the service of the guests, and wait on them, with more punctuality and respect, than they would require from hired servants. Eggs are served up to the guests : they have no other article of food, that is not allowed to the religious; but it is furnished them in a greater quantity, and much better dressed. They take their meals in a common room, and, except that the Imitation of Christ is read during the meal, every thing passes in the strictest silence. In their attention to their guests, the monks shew all the humble and modest charity, all the joy and all the attention, which they would shew to Jesus Christ, if he were visible at the table, and they waited upon him. A tribune, at the bottom of the church, is assigned to the guests, and most of them attend the service regularly, both at its day and its night hours. Every year, while the abbé de la Trappe lived, six thousand guests were thus received. Many remained in the monastery several days. The religious never shew the least symptom of fatigue, of dissatisfac-

“ tion, or wearisomeness, in an employment, so
“ very opposite to their general habits of silence
“ and solitude.”

To the last hour of their existence at la Trappe, the same hospitality was preserved by the monks, on the same large scale. As a mere guest, no one was allowed to tarry in the monastery, more than three days ; but, if a guest were particularly recommended, or shewed by his behaviour, that he wished to prolong his stay, from real motives of religion or piety, he might protract it for any time.

On the arrival of every stranger, a monk received him, at the gate, prostrated himself at his feet, took him to the chapel, knelt down, and said a prayer, entreating the blessing of God upon the stranger. Then, he took him to an apartment, called the Strangers' Room, and pointed out some written rules, which strangers were particularly requested to observe : one of the rules, contained an entreaty to them to mention no public or private news. The monks readily answered any questions which were put to them : but, in some parts of the house, they were not permitted to speak, and silence, there, was required of the strangers. The monks also, were enjoined by the rule, not to enter voluntarily into any conversation with strangers, that was not edifying. “ I believe,” says a protestant writer now before me, “ that very few, even among protestants, have visited la Trappe, without being
“ struck with the heavenly countenances of these

“ recluses, and with the truly angelic discourse,
“ which flows from their lips, as from a fountain
“ of living water. It is impossible to describe the
“ gravity, benignity, peace and love, visible in
“ most of their aspects, or the humility, yet self-
“ possessed politeness and attention, in their man-
“ ners. When they are asked, why they choose
“ this seclusion, their answer is uniform : To glorify
“ God, to repent of their sins, and to pray for the
“ unhappy world, which prays not for itself.”

The valuable publication, to which I have referred, gives the following interesting account of a visit paid to la Trappe, by our unfortunate monarch, James the second.

“ Among the most frequent visitors of la Trappe,
“ was the unfortunate James the second.

“ James had heard of la Trappe, in the days of
“ his prosperity. After his misfortune, he resolved
“ to visit a seclusion, he had so long felt a curiosity
“ to see. This design was not executed till after
“ his return from his unsuccessful expedition to
“ Ireland.

“ He arrived at la Trappe in the evening of the
“ 20th of November 1690. As soon as M. de
“ Rancé heard he was come, he went forth to meet
“ him, at the door of the monastery. The king
“ was on horseback. As soon as he alighted,
“ the abbé prostrated himself before him. This
“ is the custom, with respect to all strangers.

“ Nevertheless, it was in this instance, performed
“ in a manner expressive of peculiar respect.

“ The king felt pain at seeing the abbé in this
“ humiliating posture before him. He raised him
“ up, and then entreated his benediction. This
“ the abbé gave, accompanying it with a speech of
“ some length. He assured his majesty, he thought
“ it a great honour to see a monarch, who was suf-
“ fering for the sake of Christ ; who had renounced
“ three kingdoms, from conscientious motives. He
“ added, that the prayers of the whole community
“ had been constantly offered up in his behalf.
“ They had continually implored Heaven, to afford
“ him renewed strength, that he might press on,
“ in the power of God, till he should receive an
“ eternal and immortal crown.

“ The king was then conducted to the chapel.
“ They afterwards conversed together for an hour.
“ James joined in the evening service, by which he
“ appeared much edified and consoled.

“ The king’s supper was served up by the monks,
“ and consisted of roots, eggs, and vegetables. He
“ seemed much pleased with all he saw. After
“ supper, he went and looked at a collection of
“ Maxims of christian conduct, which were framed,
“ and hung up against the wall.—He perused
“ them several times ; and, expressing how much
“ he admired them, requested a copy.

“ Next day, the king attended the chapel. He

“ communicated with the monks. This he did,
“ with great devotion. He afterwards went to see
“ the community, occupied at their manual labour,
“ for an hour and a half. Their occupations chiefly
“ consist of ploughing, turning, basket-making,
“ brewing, carpentry, washing, transcribing manuscripts, and book-binding.

“ The king was much struck with their silence
“ and recollection. He, however, asked the abbé,
“ if he did not think they laboured too hard?
“ M. de Rancé replied, ‘Sire, that which would
“ be hard to those, who seek pleasure, is easy to
“ those, who practise penance.’—In the afternoon, the king walked for some time on a fine
“ terrace, formed between the lakes, surrounding
“ the monastery. The view from this place is
“ peculiarly striking.

“ His Britannic majesty then went to visit an
“ hermit, who lived by himself in a small hut, which
“ he had constructed in the woods surrounding
“ la Trappe. In this retreat, he spent his time
“ in prayer and in praise; remote from all intercourse with any one, excepting the abbé de la
“ Trappe. This gentleman was a person of rank:
“ He had formerly been distinguished, as one of
“ the bravest officers in king James’s army. On
“ entering his cell, the monarch appeared much
“ struck, and affected with the entire change in his
“ demeanor and expression of countenance.

“ In a short time, he recovered himself.—After

“ a great variety of questions, on the part of the
“ king, he at length asked him, ‘ at what hour in
“ the morning, he attended the service of the
“ convent, in winter?’ He answered, ‘ At about
“ half past three.’

“ ‘ But,’ returned Lord Dumbarton, who was
“ in the king’s suite, ‘ surely that is impossible.
“ How can you traverse this intricate forest
“ in the dark? especially at a season of the
“ year, when, even in the day-time, the road
“ must be undiscernible, from the frost and
“ snow.’

“ ‘ My Lord,’ replied the hermit, ‘ I should
“ blush to esteem these trifles as any inconve-
“ nience, in serving a heavenly monarch, when I
“ have so often braved dangers, so far more immi-
“ nent, for the chance of serving an earthly
“ prince.’

“ ‘ You are right,’ returned the king. ‘ How
“ wonderful, that so much should be sacrificed to
“ temporal potentates; whilst so little should be
“ endured in serving Him, the only king, im-
“ mortal and invisible, to whom alone true honour
“ and power belong—that God, who has done
“ so much for us!’

“ ‘ Surely, however,’ continued Lord Dumbar-
“ ton to the hermit, ‘ you must be thoroughly
“ tired with passing all your time alone in this
“ gloomy forest?’

“ ‘ No,’ interposed the king, himself replying

“ to the question ; ‘ He has, indeed, chosen a
“ path widely different to that of the world.
“ Death, which discovers all things, will show
“ that he has chosen the right one.’

“ The king paused for a reply ; none being
“ made, he continued : ‘ There is a difference,’
“ said he, turning to the hermit, ‘ between you,
“ and the rest of mankind : You will die the
“ death of the righteous ; and you will rise at the
“ resurrection of the just. But they,’—here he
“ paused ; his eyes seemed full of tears, and his
“ mind absent, as if intent on painful recollection.

“ After a few moments, he hastily rose, and
“ taking a polite and kind leave of the gentleman,
“ returned with his retinue to the monastery.

“ During his whole stay, the king assisted at all
“ the offices. In all of them, he manifested a deep
“ and fervent devotion. His misfortunes seemed
“ to have been the means of awakening his heart,
“ to worship God, in spirit and in truth.

“ Next day, the king prepared to depart at an
“ early hour.

“ On taking leave, he threw himself at M. de
“ Rancé’s feet ; and, with tears, requested his
“ parting benediction.

“ The abbé bestowed it in a most solemn and
“ affecting manner.

“ The king, on rising, recognized the monk on
“ whose arm he leant, to get up. He was a noble-
“ man, who had long served in his army, (the

“honourable Robert Graham). ‘Sir,’ said the king, addressing himself to him, ‘I have never ceased to regret the generosity, with which you made a sacrifice of a splendid fortune in behalf of your king. I can, however, now grieve at it no longer; since I perceive that your misfortunes in the service of an earthly monarch, have proved the blessed means of your having devoted your heart to a heavenly one.’

“The king then mounted his horse, and departed.

“James the second, from that period, repeated his visits to la Trappe annually.

“On these occasions, he always bore his part in the exercises of the community. He often assisted at the conferences of the monks, and spoke with much unction. It is said, that the king’s character appeared to undergo a strikingly perceptible, though, a progressive change.

“He, every year, appeared to grow in piety and grace; and he evidently increased in patience and submission to the divine will.

“In 1696, the queen accompanied the king to la Trappe. She was accommodated, for three days, with all her retinue, in a house adjoining the monastery, built for the reception of the Commendatory abbots. She was much pleased with her visit, and expressed herself to be not less edified than the king.

“Both of them entertained sentiments of the

“ highest veneration for M. de Rancé. Their
“ acquaintance, thus begun, was soon matured into
“ a solid friendship.

“ They commenced a correspondence, which was
“ regularly maintained on both sides, till M. de
“ Rancé’s death.

“ The following are the terms, in which the king
“ expressed himself, respecting M. de Rancé :

“ ‘ I really think nothing has afforded me so
“ much consolation, since my misfortune, as the
“ conversation of that venerable saint, the abbé
“ de la Trappe. When I first arrived in France,
“ I had but a very superficial view of religion ;
“ if I might be said to have any thing deserving
“ that name. The abbé de la Trappe was the
“ first person who gave me any solid instruction
“ with respect to genuine christianity.

“ ‘ I formerly looked upon God, as an omnipo-
“ tent creator, and as an arbitrary governor. I
“ knew his power to be irresistible. I therefore
“ thought his decrees must be submitted to,
“ because they could not be withstood. Now,
“ my whole view is changed. The abbé de la
“ Trappe has taught me to consider this great
“ God as my father ; and to view myself as adopted
“ into his family. I now can look upon myself
“ as become his son, through the merits of my
“ Saviour, applied to my heart by his Holy Spirit
“ I am now convinced, not only that we ought
“ to receive misfortunes with patience, because

“ They are inevitable, but I also feel assured, that
“ death, which rends the veil from all things, will
“ probably discover to us as many new secrets of
“ love and mercy in the œconomy of God’s provi-
“ dence, as in that of his grace. God, who gave
“ up his only Son to death for us, must surely have
“ ordered all inferior things by the same spirit
“ of love.’

“ Such were king James’s sentiments respecting
“ M. de Rancé. The abbé, on the other hand,
“ entertained as high an opinion of him. The
“ following passage, concerning the unfortunate
“ king of England, occurs in one of M. de Rancé’s
“ letters to a friend :

“ ‘ I will now speak to you, concerning the king
“ of England. I never saw any thing more striking,
“ than the whole of his conduct. Nor have I ever
“ seen any person, more elevated above the tran-
“ sitory objects of time and sense. His tranquil-
“ lity, and submission to the divine will, are truly
“ marvellous. He really equals some of the most
“ holy men of old, if indeed he may not be rather
“ said to surpass them.

“ ‘ He has suffered the loss of three kingdoms ;
“ yet his equanimity and peace of mind are undis-
“ turbed. He speaks of his bitterest enemies,
“ without warmth. Nor does he ever indulge in
“ those insinuations, which even good men are apt
“ to fall into, when speaking of their enemies. He
“ knows the meaning of two texts of Scripture,

“ which are too much neglected :—‘ It is given you
“ to suffer ;’ and, ‘ despise not the gift of God !’
“ He, therefore, praises God for every persecution
“ and humiliation, which he endures. He could
“ not be in a more equable state of mind, even if
“ he were in the meridian of temporal prosperity.

“ ‘ His time is always judiciously and regularly
“ appropriated. His day is filled up in so exact a
“ manner, that nothing can be well either added
“ to or retrenched from his occupations.

“ ‘ All his pursuits tend to the love of God and
“ man. He appears uniformly to feel the divine
“ presence. This is perhaps the first and most
“ important step in the divine life. It is the foun-
“ dation of all which follow.

“ ‘ The Queen is in every respect influenced by
“ the same holy desires.

“ ‘ The union of these two excellent persons, is
“ founded on the love of God.

“ ‘ It may be truly termed, an holy and a sacred
“ one.’ ”

CHAP. XII.

Sickness in the monastery ;—Death of several of the religious ;—Several Bishops write to the Abbé de la Trappe, recommending a relaxation of the austerities practised in the monastery ;—He takes the sentiments of the whole community on the subject :—Charges brought against the Abbé ;—His defence.

DURING the first ten years after the establishment of the reform, the monastery was very little visited by illness ; but from 1674 to 1680, the infirmary was almost always full, and deaths were very frequent. Dom Urban the prior, and Dom Augustine the sub-prior of the monastery, died ; thirty other religious, either preceded or followed them. In 1676, the abbé himself was taken very ill, and removed to the infirmary. In the following August, he quitted it, but with a slow fever, which never afterwards entirely left him.

In the midst of this severe visitation, the fervor and spirit of mortification of the religious, suffered no visible diminution ; but it was impossible that they should not be affected by the loss, almost sudden, of so many of their edifying companions, and by the scenes of death, which so often passed before their eyes. It disheartened them ; and the abbot himself, though he preserved his confidence in God,

began to fear the worst. His fears were increased, as he found an opinion prevailed, that the sickness and mortality of the monastery, were owing to the excessive severities of the rule, and that many persons were deterred, by their apprehensions on this account, from entering into the order.

He received letters from many prelates of acknowledged zeal and piety, which intimated this opinion, and recommended strongly some relaxation of the general severity of the discipline. The abbé de la Trappe was sensible of the importance of these communications. Though he was perfectly convinced that the austerities, practised by his community, fell short of those, which had been practised by St. Benedict and St. Barnard, and their first disciples, that they were far from exceeding the ordinary measure of human strength, and that the illness, and deaths, which had taken place in his community, were owing to inclement seasons and other ordinary causes of mortality, he determined to give the matter a full and dispassionate consideration. The result of it convinced him, that his opinion on it was well founded: but, before he came to a settled resolution, he thought it advisable to take the sentiments of all the individuals of the community. With this view, he assembled all the monks and lay-brothers. He explained to them, fully and without disguise, the subject on which he convened them. He observed to them, that the rule did not suggest to them a practice, to which

they had not expressed a very willing assent, and that most of the extraordinary austerities, practised in the monastery, were of their own proposal : still those austerities might be objectionable ; and prudence might require that they should be discontinued, or modified. He desired them, therefore, to say, candidly and explicitly, whether, after the long experience, which they had then had of them, they thought, that any relaxation or alteration in the established discipline of the house, was desirable.

All the religious delivered their opinions ; and only one of them (a lay-brother) expressed a wish for a mitigation : all the other monks not only declared against any mitigation of the rule, but expressed a wish for greater severity. The general expressions of their opinions was, that “ the penance, practised at la Trappe, was less, than what every sinner should do for his sins ; and that it ought rather to be augmented, than diminished.” A minute, of what passed at the assembly, was drawn up and printed, and copies of it were circulated among those, whose approbation the abbé thought it important to conciliate.

The sentiments of the abbé, on this occasion, are thus expressed in a letter, which he wrote, in reply to one of the bishops, from whom he received the letters, which have been mentioned : “ Though,” says the abbé, “ we are no longer in the world, and have quitted it for a much better thing, the peace, which solitude bestows, the world occupies

“ itself on our concerns. But we heed not what the
“ world says ; we know the anathema, which Christ
“ had denounced to the world, and that salvation
“ is more easily obtained in the midst of its
“ slanders, than amidst its praises. We persist,
“ therefore, in our old tract. The great number
“ of those, whom God has called to himself, has
“ not weakened the courage of those, who remain.
“ On the contrary, it has pleased the Almighty to
“ accompany their deaths, with such blessings, that
“ every one of the religious humbly hopes that his
“ death will be the death of the just, and desires,
“ and looks up with pleasure to the end of his
“ mortal term. Thus, there is nothing less in our
“ thoughts, than moderating our austerities. In our
“ conviction, that death advances rapidly towards
“ us, we seek rather to narrow than widen our
“ ways.”

Other objections had been made to the conduct of the abbé. It was said, that he treated the monks with too much harshness ; that he always affected to appear dissatisfied with their conduct ; and thus kept them in a continual state of discouragement. In answer to these charges, he admitted that, in the chapter, he seldom omitted to proclaim any relaxation of the rule, of which he observed an individual to be guilty, or to put him into penance for the offence. This, he observed, was most explicitly enjoined by the original rule of St. Benedict, and by the codes of all the reformed congregations. Farther than this, he declared, he never

went, except on extraordinary occasions, or in respect to persons, who were gifted with an extraordinary spirit of humiliation.

It was also charged upon him, that he occasionally rebuked his religious, and put them into penance, for faults, of which he knew them to be innocent, and their innocence of which, they themselves must be aware, was fully known to him. In his answer, he adduced the examples of the most eminent ascetic superiors of ancient and modern times, to whom this practice was familiar. He also observed, that this was not his ordinary mode of proceeding, and that he only used it, where he knew beforehand, that it would be attended with salutary effects.

The abbé concludes his defence in the following terms: "Our monastery," he says, "contains
" forty-eight religious. Many of them have passed
" their eightieth year: several, by nature, are of
" a weak and infirm state of health. But none of
" them has ever expressed, or even insinuated, a
" wish, for any mitigation of the rules or practices
" of the house. On the contrary, they have re-
" peatedly proposed, that their penances and
" austerities might be increased; and particularly
" have desired, that no difference might be shewn
" them in illness and health. They have suggested
" other austerities." He mentions them, and concludes with saying; "By the mercy of God, our
" general good understanding, our peace, union,
" concord, and charity, far from diminishing, are
" constantly on the increase."

The prelates, who came forward, on this occasion, and the public at large, were satisfied with the defence of the abbé. But he had no sooner acquitted himself of these charges, than one, of a more serious nature, was brought against him. He was accused of jansenism, and great pains were taken to make him suspected of it by the monarch.—It must be a matter of some surprise to the reader, that a person, so uniformly good, and so entirely estranged from the world, as the abbé de la Trappe, should be thus persecuted: but persecution is the trial of virtue, and, to use the words of a great master in spiritual life, *Sœur la Nativité*, “the saints in heaven, triumph “ by love and glory; those on earth, by their “ trials.” Of these, the abbé de Rancé had, on this occasion, an abundant share. At first, he bore the calumny in silence; but, such efforts were made to obtain credence to it, that, the friends of the abbé informed him, that a public justification of himself was necessary: he accordingly addressed three letters to the marshal de Bellefond, a nobleman distinguished by the piety and austerity of his life, and one of the abbé’s most particular friends; the letters were printed, and generally read.

An extract from one of these letters will shew, how unjustly the abbé was accused of jansenism: the reader must be pleased with the good sense and true piety, in which it is expressed.

“ Confessing that, before my retirement from
“ the world, I was a slave to it, to the flesh, and

“ to the evil spirit, I now beg leave to assure you,
“ that, since my retirement, I have belonged to no
“ party, except that of Jesus Christ and his church;
“ that the ecclesiastical disputes of our time, have
“ given me great concern; but that I have taken
“ no other part in them, than to lament them
“ before God, and to express to him, at the foot of
“ the altar, my sorrow, that the bowels of his
“ church, my holy mother, were torn in pieces by
“ her children. I always thought it my duty to
“ submit to those, whom God has ordained to be
“ my superiors, the pope, and my bishop. What
“ they have required of me, I have done. The
“ formulary, respecting the propositions of jan-
“ senism, I have signed, without restriction or
“ reserve. In all these disputes, I have been so
“ cautious, that I have not only abstained from
“ speaking of them, but I have prevented all reports
“ of them from reaching this community; so
“ that a single word has not been spoken within
“ the walls of the monastery, upon any of the
“ points in contest, or the agitators of them. The
“ more the contending parties became animated,
“ and the disputes grew warm, the more I retired
“ from them, fearing to engage in any thing con-
“ trary to my profession, or tending to disturb our
“ solitude or its tranquillity; but with a firm and
“ constant resolution to obey, with the most per-
“ fect submission, the orders of the pope, and the
“ decisions of the church. It may be truly said,

“ that, while the rest of the world has been disturbed by these disputes, we have enjoyed a profound peace. I have always thought it did not become me to take any part in them ; and that it was the will of God, not, that I should discuss the truths of faith, but, that I should practice the duties, which they inculcate ; and that, instead of operose inquiries into the nature of divine grace, I should endeavour to draw from heaven its blessings, on the flock entrusted to my care, by persevering in prayer, silence, and abjection ; and that nothing, short of a strong manifestation of the will of God, should draw me from a line of conduct, evidently so conformable to my situation.”

The reader must be pleased with the good sense, and the truly christian spirit, of these sentiments.

It is certain that the abbé de la Trappe, had no partiality for the doctrines of Jansenius, or its adherents. In the beginning of his conversion, he advised his great friend the bishop of Alèt, who afterwards leaned too much to the jansenists, to sign the formulary ; and, soon after the death of the celebrated Arnaud, he expressed himself in a letter to one of his friends, in these terms : “ At last, M. Arnaud is dead. After having pushed his career, as far as it could be carried by him, it was at length necessary that it should end. Whatever may be said of it, many questions are now terminated. His erudition and authority

“ had great weight with his party : happy is he, “ that belongs to no party, but that of Jesus “ Christ.” This letter, being made public, gave great offence to the partisans of Arnaud : and Tillemont, the celebrated church historian, expostulated on it; with the abbé de la Trappe, and wished him to disavow the offensive construction put on his letter; but this, the abbé explicitly declined.

In the midst of these attacks, the community prospered; the number of the religious increased every year: the abbé added considerably to the buildings; he repaired the church, and placed in it, a statue of the Blessed Virgin, which was much admired by connoisseurs. In neatness, and a kind of religious simplicity, nothing could exceed the beauty of the church; but it had nothing of ornament, nothing which bespoke expence; in the whole of its appearance, it was equally conformable to the devotion and the austere poverty of its venerable owners.

CHAP. XIII.

*The Spiritual Writings of the
Abbé de la Trappe.*

WHEN the abbé de la Trappe pronounced his religious vows, it was his earnest wish to be buried in the retirement, which he had chosen. During

several years after that event, his solitude was little invaded; but, in the course of a few years, his reputation attracted general notice, and many persons, sought his advice. At first, he declined giving it: at length, it was solicited by persons of so elevated a rank, that it was impossible for him, decently, to refuse it. Their example was followed by others; and their number became so great, that he was soon inundated, from every part of France, with letters, requesting his spiritual counsel. These, he regularly answered. *Two volumes of his Letters* appeared in print after his decease, and have been generally admired.

Still, he abstained from the personal direction of any persons, except the religious of his monastery: he also declined the office of visitor of other religious houses. With much difficulty, however, he accepted the spiritual direction of the abbey of Clairèts, a convent of Cistercian nuns, attached by tenure to the monastery of la Trappe. A considerable degree of mitigation prevailing in its general discipline, and the abbess, and many of the nuns, wishing for its reform, an application was made to the abbé de la Trappe, to undertake the spiritual direction of the convent. To this he reluctantly consented. He proceeded in it with his usual zeal, tempered with his usual prudence; and he succeeded. At the third visitation, all the nuns, except three or four of the most aged, accepted the reform; and it was regularly established in the con-

vent. In his journies to the convent, and his return from it, he always declined stopping at an inn, or the houses of individuals, and made his meal, on a piece of dry bread, at the corner of a wood.

The same love of retirement, which made the abbé unwilling to communicate with strangers on their spiritual concerns, long withheld him from giving to the public, any spiritual performance of his pen. It was not, till after he had passed his sixtieth year, that he was known to the public as a spiritual writer. Then, in obedience to the advice of several persons of distinguished learning and piety, but much against his own will, he published his *Treatise on the Sanctity and Duties of the Monastic State*.

Reasoning from the uniform practice and doctrine of the founders and reformers of monastic orders, he shews, in this work, that a severe practice of penance and mortification is the real object of the monastic institute ; and that continued silence, extreme abstinence, and regular manual labour, have been always considered, by the founders or reformers of monastic orders, as the likeliest means of establishing, and preserving in them, a true spirit of penance and mortification. All profane study, even the study of theology, except for such of the monks, as were destined for the church, the number of whom, he suggests, should be very small, he entirely proscribes ; and he imputes the relaxation of monastic orders, to two causes—the general

dispensation with the rule of perpetual silence, and the substitution of study for manual labour.

This work made considerable noise. All persons, allowed that the diction of it was most elegant ; that the learning and penetration of the author were visible in every page ; that it abounded with all the graces of composition ; and that, by a happy mixture of reasoning and eloquence, it was calculated to gain the reader over to the author's opinion. It is certain that the publication of it was attended with the most salutary effects. " Few works," says Marsollièr, " have been more generally approved, " or have procured the authors of them more " general applause. It was equally esteemed in " France, Rome, Italy, and in all other catholic " countries : and few works have produced more " fruit. It not only converted many individuals, " but it changed the face of many communities : it " may be said, that, before its appearance, few com- " munities, either of men or women, were really " acquainted with the obligations of a monastic " state."

Still, it told many unwelcome truths ; and, many, to whom those truths were unwelcome, were highly displeased with the author, and uttered the most offensive speeches, and published the bitterest satires against him. But he met with one most respectable adversary. It is admitted, that the part of the work, of which we are speaking, which is most open to animadversion, is that, in which the abbé

de la Trappe seems to exclude serious, and even theological studies, from the monastic state. This was severely felt by the Maurist monks. They had enriched the public with some learned works, both in sacred literature and history, and, at that time, were engaged in several learned publications.—It was, therefore, natural for them to be displeased with the abbé's excluding study from monastic establishments. By their desire, Dom Mabillon, one of their community, and the most learned man in France, in monastic antiquities, published his *Treatise on Monastic Studies*. The first part of it, is a defence of them, against the abbé de la Trappe. He admits, that monasteries should not be academies of science ; but contends, that a reasonable number of monks should be instructed in profane and sacred literature, both for the instruction of the community, and the general instruction of the faithful ; and he professes to shew, that it was a rule of every monastic institute, that some part of the day should be allowed for study. To the work of father Mabillon, the abbé de Rancé published an *Answer* ; to that answer, father Mabillon published a reply ; and here, the dispute closed. In all, that constitutes the charms of literary composition, the abbé was superior to his benedictine adversary ; in learning he was his inferior ; and the public universally assigned to Dom Mabillon the high praise, of superior and perfect moderation.—as to the real merit of the question, it seems to be

generally understood, that there was no substantial difference between them. This is remarked both by Dom Tassin, in his Literary History of the Congregation of St. Maur, and by Dom Ruinart, the favourite disciple and biographer of Mabillon. “The two great men,” says the former of these writers, in the work we have cited, (page 211), “did not greatly differ. One of them sought to “expose the danger of study, and to shew, that “when studies are abused, they are destructive of “regularity; the other advocated the cause of “well-regulated study; and contended that, with- “out it, piety cannot long subsist in monastic com- “munities. Thus the contest was soon at an end. “The two adversaries, who had always esteemed “each other, remained united in Jesus Christ; “and their differing in opinion never lessened “the charity, which each of them bore to the “other.”

The moderation, which Mabillon displayed on this occasion, was the more edifying, as moderation so seldom attends polemic warfare. A few years, however, before the dispute which we have mentioned, took place, Mabillon had been engaged in a literary controversy, with an adversary, in whose proceedings, in his regard, this amiable virtue appeared in its highest degree. The discussion, to which we refer, took place between Mabillon and father Papebrooch, a Belgic Jesuit of immense learning; and it was as much a contest for pre-

eminence in humility, as a contest for literary pre-eminence. On the point in dispute, Mabillon had the advantage: this was candidly admitted by the humble Jesuit: "At first," he said, "I felt some pain in seeing myself so completely confuted; but I soon rejoiced in the success of truth, and I could scarcely lament that I had been guilty of errors, when I saw the learning which I had drawn forth for the confutation of them." No literary triumph is worth such a sentiment of humility.—The work of the abbé de Rancé, on the Sanctity and Duties of the Monastic State, was followed by his *Treatise on the Obligations of Christians*, his *Explanation of the Gospels*, and some *ascetic works*. Two volumes of his Letters were published after his decease. All his works are written with great elegance and force; but his treatise on the Sanctity and Duties of the Monastic State is allowed to be his masterpiece.

CHAP. XIV.

The Abbé de la Trappe resigns his dignity of Abbot:—Appointment and Death of his Successor:—Appointment of a new Abbot;—His Resignation:—the Appointment of a Successor to him:—Infirmities of the Abbé de la Trappe:—The last Years of his Life.

THE preceding pages have conducted the abbé de la Trappe to those years, in which all, who look on

the things of this life, with the eye of faith, wish to interpose between them and their last earthly hour, an interval, wholly dedicated to spiritual concerns, and a preparation for a happy eternity. Under this impression, the abbé de la Trappe began to think seriously of resigning his dignity, and spending his remaining years as a private monk. For some time, his infirmities had increased on him rapidly ; a cruel rheumatism had deprived him entirely, of the use of his right arm ; and his whole frame began to feel the weight of age, and his long penance and mortification. The vigour of his mind, and his zeal for the spiritual advancement of his religious, were unabated ; he retained his authority over them, and he possessed, in as high a degree as ever, their affection and confidence ; but his body sunk under the fatigues of his charge ; his infirmities prevented his attendance at the chapter, he was incapable of manual labour ; and those exhortations, by which he had so often animated his religious to the discharge of their duties, were beyond his strength. He began therefore to fear, that, if he continued in office, the want of that example and exertion, which a community naturally expects from their superior, would be soon felt, and insensibly introduce into it, the tepidity and relaxation, from which it was the most earnest desire of his soul to preserve it.

But the abbé never acted with precipitation : he therefore advised with his friends, on the step

which he meditated; and, hearing from them, nothing which appeared to him a serious objection to it, he determined on the measure. By a respectful letter, he informed the king of his resolution, requested his majesty's permission to carry it into effect, and suggested the person, whom he wished for his successor. His majesty received the application favourably, and appointed the successor, whom he desired. On the 28th of December 1694, Don Zozimus, (that was his successor's name), was installed in his dignity, and the abbé de Rancé immediately fell into the rank of a private religious, without any exemption or privilege. With the assistance of two monks, he dragged himself from the infirmary to the chapter, and flung himself at the feet of the new abbot: "Father," he said, "I come to promise to you the obedience, which I owe to you, as my superior, and I wish you to treat me as the lowest of your religious." Surprised at his humility, and having offered, in vain, to raise him from the floor, the new abbot sunk on his knees before him, and said, "And I, holy father, renew to you the promise of obedience, which I made to you, on my entry into this holy house, and engage myself never to depart from it."

Both these edifying promises were inviolably observed. Where, by the rules of the order, a permission of the abbot was required to any act, the ancient abbot always asked it: the new abbot

frequently solicited him, to accept from him, a general permission to act, on all such occasions, as he should think proper : but this, the ancient abbot always declined. On the other hand, the new abbot always treated his predecessor as his master and father ; and not only permitted, but exhorted and pressed the religious, to recur to him, on every occasion, and to advise with him in all their wants.

Incredible as it may be thought, the ancient abbot still continued an object of calumny. “ When
 “ I behold,” says Bourdaloue, in his panegyric on Saint Francis Xavier, “ the ministers of the gospel,
 “ in elevation and splendor, favoured, honoured,
 “ and approved of by the world, I tremble ; I
 “ make no account of those deceitful advantages ;
 “ I feel, that it was not in this manner, that
 “ the world was sanctified. But, when I see the
 “ ministers of the gospel persecuted and hated by
 “ the world, I augur well of it ; for I know that
 “ the best ministers of the church always met with
 “ this treatment.” This persecution, this contempt, this hatred, the ancient abbot of la Trappe always experienced from the world, and knew its value in the eye of the Almighty. “ Did a per-
 “ son,” he used to say, “ but know the value of
 “ an enemy, he would purchase him with gold,
 “ that he might pardon him, and thus entitle him-
 “ self to the pardon, which the eternal truth has
 “ promised to those, who pardon their enemies.”
 —In his rules for the monastery of la Trappe, he

ordered a mass to be said every day, for the enemies and persecutors of the community.

His infirmities and sufferings continued to increase ; and, at length, confined him to the infirmary. His rheumatism produced an abscess in his left hand ; it was cured by a painful incision ; but the humour moved into the right arm, and swelled it to four times the size of the other. By degrees, the rheumatism spread itself over every part of his body. His patience increased with his sufferings. Every day, at two o'clock, after midnight, he was lifted from the boards, which served him for a bed, and placed in a chair of straw. On that, without venturing any change of posture, and almost without motion, he remained till seven in the evening, when he was carried back to his bed ; but he never showed the least impatience, and his fortitude was so great, that he received all, who approached him, with a serene countenance, and prevented, as much as possible, their observing his sufferings. It was, however, impossible to conceal them entirely ; and he then requested those, who observed them, to pray to God to bestow on him, the patience, of which he stood in so much need. He expatiated on the happiness of having our sins punished in this life, and frequently observed, that ages of sufferings on this side the grave, were not equal to a moment's suffering in purgatory. He continually exhorted the religious, who were in the infirmary with him, to bear their sufferings with

patience; and, in the fervour of his exhortations, seemed to lose the sense of his own pains. The comforts, which the religious derived from his exhortations, cannot be described. To the last moment of his existence, a look, a word of exhortation, from him, was a source of unspeakable consolation to them. "When they were insensible," says Marsollièr, "to every thing else, a word from him would animate their countenances with a gleam of joy." When he was left to himself, he conversed constantly with God: he repeated the whole Psalter every day: the indulgences, which his suffering state rendered necessary, he always wished to decline; and nothing, short of his superior's absolute command, could induce him to accept them.

A severer cross, than any which he had experienced, now awaited him. The good abbé Zozimus died; and, upon the application of the ancient abbot, the king appointed Dom Francis Armand, his successor. It appeared, too soon, that the ancient abbot had been mistaken in his choice. Dom Armand threw all the temporal concerns of the house into disorder, and endangered its spiritual œconomy: its friends were scandalized, its enemies triumphed, and the desolation of the ancient abbot was complete. He accused himself of being the author of all the evil, occasioned by the new abbot. His misery was extreme. "The present," says Marsollièr, "afflicted him, the

“ future terrified him ; there was none, with whom
“ he could advise, or to whom unbosom himself.
“ Thus, while he suffered excruciating bodily pains
“ his mind was tortured by all that is most afflict-
“ ing in confusion and fear.” To add to his
sufferings, the new abbot, and three of the reli-
gious, often treated him with personal indignity,
and had the meanness to reproach him, with the
inobservance of some of the rules of the order, with
which his sufferings made it impossible for him to
comply.

In this excess of misery, the ancient abbot kept
his trust in God :—and his trust in God was not
vain. When every thing appeared desperate, the
new abbot came to a sudden resolution, of relin-
quishing his dignity, and soon afterwards formally
resigned it. It is unnecessary to give a more mi-
nute account of this afflicting scene : it is sufficient
to say, that, on the recommendation of the ancient
abbot, Dom Jacques de la Cour, one of the reli-
gious of la Trappe, was appointed his successor, and,
for several years, governed the monastery with ex-
emplary wisdom and piety.

To the honour of the religious, it should, how-
ever, be added, that, among them, there were but
three, who sided with Dom Armand, or, in any
manner, co-operated with his views. The others
took no part in the contest. They saw one abbot
give in his resignation, and another appointed his
successor ; but none of them inquired the reason of

these changes. Marsollièr, who spent a considerable time in the monastery, and was a very exact observer, and very particular in his inquiries, declares, in his account of these disputes, that, with the exception of Dom Armand and his three adherents, and some of the monks, who were in the principal offices of the monastery, there was not in it a single religious, who had the slightest knowledge of the real nature of this distressing dispute.—Such was their happy abstraction from temporal objects, and continued absorption in God!

CHAP. XV.

The Death of the Abbé de la Trappe.

IN the state of suffering, which we have mentioned, the ancient abbé continued six years. He then became incapable of receiving the visits of the religious; and therefore addressed to them a letter, which, by the permission of the new abbot, was read at the chapter. After expressing in it, his affection for them, and his earnest wishes for their welfare, he mentions, in delicate and affecting terms, that his sufferings prevented his receiving further visits from them, without previous notice of them, and his appointing the time of their call. He entreats their prayers:—"Pray to God," he says, "that he will grant me the happiness of

“ closing my eyes in peace, in penance, in absolute and unreserved resignation to his holy will ;
“ that he will unite me to our brethren, who have
“ preceded us, and whom, we humbly hope, he has
“ crowned with the glory and repose of the saints :
“ a happiness I wish all of you, as fervently as I
“ desire it for myself.”

After writing this letter, he began his immediate preparation for death.—On the 18th of October, 1700, the year of the general jubilee, he informed the abbot, that he perceived his end was approaching, and earnestly desired all the succours of the church. On the 24th, he received the holy communion, to gain the graces of the jubilee : On the 26th, he received the viaticum ; and, on the same same day, he received extreme unction, the whole community, attending in tears. When it was finished, he called each of them to him, and embraced him ; then, raising his voice, he assured them all, “ that he bore them, at that time, the
“ same affection, which he had always borne them ;
“ and that, if God should vouchsafe him the mercy,
“ which he trusted he should receive from him,
“ he would ever pray for them.” He recommended to them, charity, union and silence, and entreated them never to forget, that, while they should be faithful to God, he would never abandon them. The new abbot then presented the crucifix to him : “ Behold,” he said, “ Him, who snatched
“ you from the dangerous ways, in which you were

“ once engaged, to hide you under his wings, in
“ this holy solitude, where he has showered on
“ you the richest treasure of his grace. He now
“ fills up the measure of his love for you, by pre-
“ paring you for his glory.”—“ Alas!” replied
the ancient abbot, “ I have not made the use, which
“ I ought to have made of his grace : but, we
“ serve a good master. I hope he will take pity
“ on me, and supply my defects by his infinite
“ mercy and the superabundance of the merits of
“ his Son.”

The abbot, perceiving that speaking was painful to him, requested his benediction for the community : He raised his hands to heaven, prayed to God, to hear his prayer, and then pronounced his blessing over them. The community received it on their knees ; and then, dissolved in tears, retired. The physician, who was present, said to him, aloud, “ Yours, is the death of the predestinate. In the
“ world, I see no such patience, no such constancy
“ in suffering.”—“ God only,” replied the ancient abbot, “ is a christian’s support in his sufferings ;
“ whatever mine may be, God deals with me in his
“ mercy. When one has merited hell-fire, every
“ suffering should be borne with patience ; every
“ suffering is light.”

The religious frequently called on him, and entreated his blessing. However unwelcome the interruption was to him, he always received them with cheerfulness. One of the superiors, perceiving

it to be a painful effort, made a sign to them, to withdraw. The abbot withheld him: "God gave me to them," he said; "let them use, as they please, what belongs to them."—After he pronounced his blessing over them, he often said, "My brethren! live in the fear and love of God! My dear brethren! live in charity and union. Let all that is in you belong to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ will be wholly yours. Be so faithful to God, that nothing can separate you from any of your duties." These words, the community of la Trappe consider as a legacy bequeathed to them, by their holy father, and regard them with religious veneration.

The bishop of Séez, his diocesan, immediately, on hearing of the abbé's illness, set off for the monastery, to attend him, in his last moments. As soon as he arrived, he went to the infirmary, and found the ancient abbot in the height of a fever, but in great peace. The ancient abbot expressed great satisfaction, at seeing the bishop, and taking his hand, moved it towards his forehead, to make, upon it, the sign of the cross. He strove to raise himself from his bed, to kiss the prelate's hand; the prelate would not permit him, and gave him the kiss of peace.

Being left alone with the bishop, the ancient abbot made to him a general confession of all the sins of his life, and afterwards continued, for some time, in spiritual communication with him. The

bishop asked him, if he had any favour to request of his majesty: he begged the prelate to assure the king, that, “if it should please God to receive him
“into heaven, he would incessantly pray for the
“sanctification of his majesty, and for the prosper-
“rity of the state: that he humbly presumed to
“beseech his majesty, to continue his protection
“of the monastery, in all things, that tended to
“preserve inviolate its monastic discipline: but
“that, in every other respect, he wished it to be
“forgotten. “This” he said, “was his humble
“and last prayer to his majesty.”—Some days before, he had begun a letter to the king of England, but, his want of strength preventing his finishing it, he desired his majesty might be informed, that, in his last moments, he had remembered him.

The bishop of Séz then took his leave of him for the night; the new abbot passed it in his bed-chamber. When he rose in the morning, the antient abbot called him, and, embracing him for the last time, said to him, “My father, I love and
“honour you. Do not forget me in your prayers.
“I am a miserable sinner; but I trust in the
“goodness of God, that I shall obtain his mercy;—
“should I be admitted into his presence, I will
“ever remember you.”

It now became evident, that he would not survive the day:—Astonished at his patience, in the midst of his sufferings, the bishop lifted up his

hands to heaven, and exclaimed, "O my God! what an instruction is this to me! Never was a sacrifice more willingly or more unreservedly made to you! We trust it will be acceptable." The abbé heard the prelate's exclamation, and observed, that his life was not a sacrifice worthy of God's acceptance; and, for a time, appeared lost in the view of the greatness of the Almighty. He then offered up himself entirely to the will of God: he professed himself willing to die in that moment, or live longer in suffering, as it was most pleasing to the divine will.

The nearer he approached to eternity, the more the holy peace and tranquillity of his mind were discernible. "He appeared," says the bishop of Séez, in the narrative, which, soon after the event, he published of his death, "like one of the ancient patriarchs, of whom the Scripture speaks; who, full of days, and of the blessings, with which God rewarded their virtues, made it all their occupation and comfort, to bless and praise the Almighty, and pour, over their families, expressions of their love for them; to invoke the blessings of heaven upon them, and to imprint on their minds, the most excellent precepts of holy wisdom."

His weakness increasing, the community began, according to their pious custom, to prepare the bed of ashes and straw, on which their holy father should breathe his last. The bishop of Séez, and the new

abbot, assisted at the ceremony. When the bed was ready, the ancient abbot was moved to it, and helped to place himself upon it. The bishop of Séez knelt at his side, and, holding out his hand to him, desired the dying abbot to place his hand within it. The abbé did so, with great respect. The bishop then presented a crucifix to him, and asked him, if he did not beg pardon of God for all his sins? he answered—"from the bottom of my heart, I beg of God to pardon my many and grievous sins. I tremble before his justice, but his mercy gives me all the confidence, which a son has in his father." His weakness obliged him to pause for a few moments;—he then proceeded—"I conjure Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, the God of all consolation, by the infinite merits of his Son, to vouchsafe graciously to admit me into the number of those, who are to sing his praises, and love him for all eternity."

The bishop of Séez asking if he had taken any nourishment, the abbé cast on the mourning community, the look of benignity, with which he had so often surveyed them; then, turning his eye towards the bishop, he said, in a tone and manner, which were never forgotten, "Nothing has escaped their charity for me; they have attended to all my wants: I owe to them that prolongation of my life, which has procured me the consolation

“ of placing my soul in your hands, to be presented
“ by you to God.”

The bishop repeated to him many of the passages of Holy Writ: When the bishop said, from the Psalmist, “ The Lord is my light and my strength,” the abbé continued, “ Whom shall I fear ?”—When the bishop said, “ If they should rise in battle against me,” the abbé continued. “ I shall place my hope in the Lord.”—A pause ensued: the bishop then said, from the book of Revelation—“ Come, Lord Jesus, thou art my protector and deliverer !”—the ancient abbot made his final effort to speak, and said distinctly—“ O Lord ! come ! delay no longer ! My God ! come quickly.” These were the last words, which he was heard to pronounce: but his lips still moved, and he continued sensible. Understanding that some of the community, on the outside of the door of the bed-chamber, wished to be admitted into it, to be witnesses of their holy father’s death, and receive his last breath, the bishop desired the door to be opened, and the abbé signified by a look, that it gave him pleasure.

Once more, and for the last time on earth, he now surveyed his community. Perceiving his last moment was come, the bishop made the sign of the cross on his forehead: the abbé looked at the prelate, affectionately, raised his eyes to heaven, and died.

“ Such,” says Marsollièr, “ was the life, and
“ such the death, of Armand-Jean le Bouthillier
“ de Rancé, abbot and reformer of the monastery
“ of la Trappe, of the strict observance of the
“ order of Cîteaux. God raised him in the latter
“ ages, to revive, as far as the wickedness of the
“ times permitted, the ancient penance, the spirit,
“ the sentiments and the practices, of those happy
“ ages of the church, when monastic discipline
“ was in its perfection, and its full vigour.

“ He died on the 27th day of October 1700,
“ about two in the afternoon, at the age of seventy-
“ five years, having spent thirty-seven of them, in
“ solitude, and in the exercise of a rigorous and
“ continual penance, of which modern ages furnish
“ few examples. According to the usages of the
“ Cistercian order, the abbot is always buried in
“ the chapter-room ; but the venerable abbot was
“ buried in the cemetery, as it was known, that the
“ good father wished to be found, even after his
“ death, among his children.

“ If I have not related any miracles, it has not
“ been from my disbelief. I know, to use the
“ language of Scripture, that the hand of God is
“ not shortened ; and that the power to work
“ miracles, which God conferred on the church, is
“ not limited to any time, and will last to the end
“ of the world ; I even confess, that many miracles
“ worked by him, were mentioned to me at la
“ Trappe, with circumstances, which made it im-

“ possible for me to reject them. But it has ever
 “ been my opinion, that, particularly in respect to
 “ facts of this nature, it is proper to wait for the
 “ decision of the church.”*

* See Appendix, Note 3.

A P P E N D I X .

N O T E 1.

On Commendams.

THE union of several benefices in one person, was contrary to the letter and spirit of many canons of the church. To elude them, the custom of giving ecclesiastical benefices in COMMENDAM was introduced; and it was under that title, that the abbé de Rancé held most of his benefices. As the disposition, which he made of them, after his conversion, is an important circumstance of his life, it seems proper to say something, in this place, of the nature of those benefices.

In early ages of the church, when a bishopric became vacant, the metropolitan sometimes *commended*, that is, *committed*, to the care of the neighbouring bishop, the administration of its temporal and spiritual concerns, till the new prelate should be elected. In subsequent times, when the conquests of the barbarians or infidels, compelled a bishop to abandon his see, the administration of a monastery was often committed to his care, and he was allowed to retain such a portion of its

revenue, as sufficed for his decent subsistence. This was the origin of commendans. By degrees, kings and great noblemen assumed the right of making these provisional or commendatory grants, of bishoprics and monasteries, and even of priories and provostships, in favour, not only of secular priests, but of laymen. On the other hand, the regular clergy partook of the abuse; and the bishops frequently conferred in commendam, prebends in their cathedrals and collegiate churches, and even parsonages and curacies, on religious communities, or individual regulars. In the eleventh century, these practices were frequent, in most of the christian states of Europe. After that time, the custom of granting ecclesiastical benefices in commendam to laymen, generally ceased, and grants of bishoprics in commendam became much less frequent; but the practice of granting abbeys to ecclesiastics in commendam, though restrained at times by salutary provisions, always continued in force. It was admitted, that such grants were against common right, and consequently the assent of the pope to them was held to be necessary. The instrument, by which he testified this assent, was called an Indult. A distinction was made between those benefices, which were customarily, and those which were not customarily granted in commendam. Three successive grants in commendam, with a possession of forty years, under them, constituted the former; and it was then considered, that the person, entitled to present to the benefice, was entitled to the pope's indult for his nominee, as a matter of right. When the custom for the commendam was not established, it was optional in the pope to give or withhold his assent to the grant; but, in France, the king had the nomination of almost all the abbeys; and, when a grant of an abbey in commendam was solicited by him, it was

seldom refused. If it was asked for any person, who was not at least in minor orders, it was made a condition of the grant, that the grantee should receive the tonsure, within one year after its date ; but a temporary dispensation with that condition, was often granted, and often renewed.

The commendatory abbot was bound to defray the charges of the community ; to keep the buildings in repair ; to furnish the ornaments for divine service, and give suitable alms. The residue of the income was at his own disposal : but he could not alienate, either the real or personal property of the abbey. The collation of the benefices of the abbey belonged to him, and he was entitled to the rank and honours of the titular abbot. He was bound to preserve the divine service in its customary state and ceremonial ; and, as far as he could, to keep up the number of the religious. Under the title of Claustal Prior, a regular superior was always appointed to superintend the internal discipline of the house. In general, the commendatory abbot and the monastery came to some agreement, respecting the partition of the revenue : and it was a common arrangement, that the commendatory abbot should retain two-thirds of it for his own use, and leave the remaining third for the support of the abbey.

It is obvious how contrary this disposition of ecclesiastical benefices was to the intention of the founders, the spirit of the church, and the general cause of religion : but the abuse was inveterate, and it was so general, that many ecclesiastics, even of edifying lives, thought themselves justified in holding such benefices.

NOTE 2.

Respecting an Event, which is supposed to have been the immediate cause of the Conversion of the Abbé de Rancé.

THE lady, by whose death the abbé de Rancé is said, in the text, to have been so greatly affected, was the duchesse de Montbazon, so celebrated for the part which she took in the troubles of the Fronde. She died, almost suddenly, in 1657, at the age of forty-five years.

The circumstances of her death, and the effect of them on the abbé de Rancé, have been wrought into an affecting tale, in a work, published in the abbé's life-time, with the title, "*Les Veretables Motifs de la Conversion de l'Abbé de la Trappe, avec quelques Reflexions sur ses ecrits; Ou les Entretiens de Timocrate et de Philandre, sur un livre qui a pour titre, les Saints Devoir de la Vie Monastique.*" Cologne, 1685, 12mo.

That the abbé de Rancé was greatly affected by the duchess's death, appears to be certain; but that his affection for her when living, or his agitation at her death, were such, as the writer of that work describes, is altogether fabulous. 1st. The duchess was forty-five years old, and both a mother and grandmother when she died: this single circumstance makes the story altogether improbable.—2dly. It appears that the abbé's conversion took place, and was a subject of general conversation, in 1656, a year before the death of the duchess happened. This is particularly mentioned by M. de Marolles, in his *Memoirs*, page 250.—3dly. M. de Maupeou, one of the abbé de Rancé's biographers and confidential friends, communicated to him the libel

in question, and, if he had not been restrained by his earnest entreaties, would have published an answer to it. Now M. de Maupeou explicitly asserts the total falsehood of the narrative, and in proof of his assertion, shows that, instead of dying of the small-pox, which makes a prominent article in the narrative, the duchess died of a scarlet fever. He also mentions, that the abbé was in the house when the duchess was taken ill; that he was the first person who informed her of her danger; that he exhorted her to lose no time in preparing for eternity; that, for this purpose, he introduced to her, the curate of the village, in which she died; and that, in the short interval between her being taken ill and her death, he effected a reconciliation between her and one of her nearest relatives.—4thly. It is to be added, that, from the best source of information, the writer of these pages is authorized to aver, that, at la Trappe, the romantic part of the story has ever been deemed fabulous.—5thly. It should also be observed, that the satirical cast of the work we have mentioned, must, in the opinion of every candid reader, detract greatly from the credibility of its contents. This is noticed by M. Bayle, in the account, which he gives of it, in his *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*:—Greatly to his praise, he speaks of the work with due censure, and of the abbé with becoming respect.

A most honourable tribute to the memory of the abbé de Rancé is paid in the account, replete with grace and elegance, which the accomplished authoress of the *Tour to Alet*, and *la Grande Chartreuse*, has lately published. The writer of these pages has acknowledged, in the text, his obligations to her, for the interesting account given in it of James the second's visit to la Trappe. In other parts also of the text, he has availed himself of

the narrative: his apology is, that he has done it with the obliging permission of the authoress; and he is sure the reader will wish he had done it oftener.

N O T E 3.

Establishments of Trappists, in consequence of the French Revolution.

THE religious of la Trappe, for a long time after their commencement, lived in a happy ignorance of the horrors of the French revolution. At length, the superior found it necessary to inform them of the calamity, with which they were threatened; and, after some alternations of hope and fear, a decree of the national assembly pronounced the suppression of their abbey. In the mean time, Dom Augustin, the master of the novices, had obtained, from the senate of Fribourg, a roman-catholic canton in Switzerland, permission for twenty-four of the monks to establish themselves in their territory, and live there "according to their rule, and to follow it punctually," and the senate took them under its protection.—An interesting and edifying account of their journey to Fribourg is prefixed to a work published by them with the title, "Reglemens de la Maison-Dieu de Notre Dâme de la Trappe, par M. l'Abbé de Rancé, son digne Reformateur, mis en novel ordre, et augmentés des Usages particuliers de la Maison-Dieu de la Val-Sainte, de Notre Dâme de la Trappe au canton de Fribourg en Suisse." 1 vol. 4to. 1794. On the spot, which they inhabit, an abbey of the Cistercian rule formerly stood: they have converted its ruins into an habitation, in which extreme poverty, and extreme neatness and decency, are combined. They

adhere to the reform of la Trappe, except that, by the introduction of some new austerities and privations, they have brought their establishment still nearer to the original rule of St. Benedict.

Similar colonies have been founded at Mont-Bruck in Piedmont, at Santa Susanna in Arragon, at Derefeld in Westphalia, at Genoa, and at New York.

Some of the monks, who remained at la Trappe, passed into England, and, under the protection of the late Mr. Weld, established themselves at Lulworth in Dorsetshire. A community of Cistercian nuns is settled at Stapehill, in the same county. Both these communities are exact observers of the reform established by the abbé de Rancé at la Trappe.—*Canescant sæclis innumerabilibus!*

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
THOMAS À KEMPIS,
THE REPUTED AUTHOR OF
“THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.”

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
THOMAS OF KEMPIS.

IT would be found difficult to mention a devotional work, which has received such a tribute of universal approbation, as THE IMITATION OF CHRIST : it has been equally praised by the greatest geniuses, and the most holy men. The highest encomium, yet pronounced upon it, is, perhaps, Fontenelle's short eulogy, " C'est le livre, le plus beau, qui soit
" sorti de la main d'un homme, puisque l'Evangile
" n'en vient pas."—" It is the finest work, that
" hath proceeded from the pen of man, the Gos-
" pel being of divine original," (*Eloge de Cor-
neille.*)—" The imitation," says Leibniz, is one of
" the most excellent treatises that have been com-
" posed. Happy is he, who puts its contents into
" practice, and is not satisfied with merely admir-
" ing them !" (*Lettres*, pa. 77.)

Who was the author of *The Imitation*, has, more than once, been a subject of controversy. Before the close of the last century, when Du Pin wrote his “Dissertation on the author of the book, called *The Imitation of Christ*,” one hundred and fifty publications on that question are said to have issued from the press; and, since that time, several have made their appearance.

It is observable, that this controversy has very lately been revived, and carried on with great learning and spirit in France. It has given rise to a work, intitled, “*Dissertation sur soixante Traductions françaises de l’Imitation de Jesus Christ; dédiée a sa Majesté l’Imperatrice et Reine, par Ant. Alex. Barbier, Bibliothecaire de sa Majesté l’Empereur et Roi, et de son Conseil d’Etat, suivie des Considerations sur la question relative à l’auteur de Imitation. Paris, 1813.*” The fear of the cossacks suspended this learned controversy; probably it will be now resumed.

A strong argument, against the right of Thomas of Kempis to the authorship of *The Imitation*, is drawn by its adversaries, from an alleged inequality of his acknowledged works to *The Imitation*. This is particularly urged by Valart, one of the latest and not least able adversaries of the Kempisian claim.

This alleged inequality was denied by Mr. Alban Butler, the author of the “*Lives of the Saints.*” He always mentioned, in terms of great

praise, the treatises of Thomas of Kempis, *de Tribus Tabernaculis*, and *de Verâ Compunctione*. This circumstance led the writer of these pages to the perusal of those treatises, and of some other works of Thomas of Kempis, and to collect, from the best materials he could find, an account of HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS. With the result of his inquiries he now has the honour to present the reader, in the following pages.

I.

THOMAS OF KEMPIS was *born* in 1380, at Kemp, a village, situate at a small distance from Cologne. His surname was Hammerlein, or Little Hammer, translated into the word, Malleolus, by his Latin biographers.

His parents were of low condition, and highly respected for their piety. “ He was brought up,” (to use the language of one of the writers of his life), “ in poverty and hardship : his father earned “ his bread by incessant labour and the sweat of his “ brow ; his mother assiduously watched over the “ education of her children : she was always attentive to the concerns of the family, abstemious, “ silent and extremely modest.” Thus, in his earliest years, he acquired those respectable habits, which decent poverty inculcates ; he experimentally felt, how great a friend she is to virtue ; and all his writings show how much he respected her.

II.

When he attained his sixth year, he was *placed in one of the houses belonging to the Society of Brothers and Sisters of Common Life*. Gerard de Groote, whose life he afterwards wrote, a person remarkable for his piety and erudition, was its founder. It was approved by the council of Constance, and flourished in Holland, the Lower Germany, and the adjacent provinces. It was divided into two classes, the Lettered Brothers or Clerks, and the Unlettered. The former lived according to the rule of St. Augustin, and applied themselves, with exemplary zeal and assiduity, to sacred and profane learning, and the education of youth : the latter were employed in mechanic arts, and manual labour :—the female part of them, called Sisters, was employed in the same manner, and in the education of girls in works of laborious industry, suitable to their sex and condition. The whole society held their property in common ; they had stated hours of prayer,—but made no vow,—and, when they thought proper, were at full liberty to retire from the community. These excellent schools were eminently useful, by promoting religion, learning, and virtue. After flourishing for about two centuries, the number of them was lessened, in consequence of the Reformation ; and those which remained, were eclipsed by the superior merit of the Ignatian Institute. From that

time, they declined rapidly, but some of their schools still remain.--It is remarkable, that, in one of the schools of this society, Erasmus received his first rudiments of learning.

The school, in which Thomas of Kempis entered himself, was in the town of Daventer, in West Friesland: where Florentius, the immediate successor of Gerard de Groote, was vicar of the principal church. Thomas of Kempis was introduced to him: Florentius received him with great tenderness, gave him all the books, which he wanted for the prosecution of his studies, and, after keeping him some time in his family, placed him with a respectable matron, by whom he was furnished gratuitously with his board. Her house was filled with members of the same society, to whom she showed the same gratuitous hospitality.

The account, which Thomas of Kempis gives, (*de discipulis Florentii*, ch. 1,) of the manner, in which the members of this little household spent their time, is very edifying. “Much was I delighted,” those are his words, “with the devout conversation, the irreproachable manners, and the humility of my brethren. I had never seen such piety or charity. Taking no concern in what passed beyond their walls; they remained at home, employed in prayer and study, or in copying out useful books, and sanctifying this occupation by short, but frequent ejaculations of devotion.—They appeared to have but one heart

“ and one soul. Their dress was homely ; their
 “ diet spare ; their obedience to their superiors,
 “ without reserve ; their prayer, continual. By
 “ degrees, the uniform tenor of their blameless
 “ unpretending lives gained them general good-
 “ will ; and they became universally respected, as
 “ true disciples of Christ, and true lovers of their
 “ neighbour.”

III.

The copying of useful books was a favourite occupation of Thomas of Kempis, during his stay in this community ; and he warmly exhorted others to the same occupation. In his sermon, *Christus scribit in terrá*, he thus expresses himself on this subject :—“ To transcribe works, which Jesus
 “ Christ loves, by which the knowledge of him is
 “ diffused, his precepts taught, and the practice of
 “ them inculcated, is a most useful employment.
 “ If *he* shall not lose his reward, who gives a cup
 “ of cold water to his thirsty neighbour, what will
 “ not be the reward of those, who, by putting
 “ good works into the hands of their neighbours,
 “ open to them the fountains of eternal life. Blessed
 “ are the hands of such transcribers ! Which of
 “ the writings of our ancestors would now be re-
 “ membered, if there had been no pious hand to
 “ transcribe them ?”

In this encomium of the transcribers of useful works, there is no exaggeration ; and the unre-

mitted diligence of the monks in this employment, is entitled to the thanks of every christian. For all that has been preserved to us of the writers of Greece or Rome, and, what is of greater consequence, for all the monuments of our holy religion, and even for the sacred pages, which contain the word of God, we are indebted to their useful and unwearied labours. To this, Gerhardus Tychsen, professor of philosophy and oriental literature in the university of Rostock, in his *Testamen de varis Codicum Hebræorum Veteris Testamenti Manuscriptis*, 1772, bears an honourable testimony : “ I am sensible,” he says, “ that it is the general opinion, that the study of the fine arts was buried during the middle ages ; but it is certain, that, while literature was crushed every where else, it found a refuge in monasteries.” He enumerates their various literary exertions ; particularly dwells on the general beauty and regularity of their transcriptions, and expresses his astonishment at their excellence. Thomas of Kempis was an excellent copyist : some of his transcriptions still remain, and show his eminence in calligraphy : among them are, a large Latin bible, in four volumes, and some extracts from the works of St. Bernard.

IV.

Thomas of Kempis took due time for *deliberation*, before he determined on a religious state.

His master, Florentius, wished those who inclined to it, to be slow in forming such a resolution; but, having formed it, to be careful to avoid every thing which might divert them from it. One of the biographers of Thomas of Kempis mentions, that, in a conversation with him, Florentius observed to him three temptations, to which beginners in a spiritual life were particularly exposed. The first was, when a person recently converted to a life of virtue, returns to his worldly friends, on the pretence of endeavouring to convert them. Of ten, who yield to this temptation, scarcely one, Florentius used to say, does not relapse into his former habits. The second temptation is, when a lowly layman, who has led, for some time, a regular and pious life, wishes to enter into holy orders. This, according to Florentius, proceeds, too often, from a secret pride, which makes the layman wish for a higher occupation than that of his humble lot. The third temptation is, when a priest, who is gifted with talents and learning, seeks for the dignities of the church, merely from a wish, as he flatters himself, of being useful to his neighbours. This was often described by Florentius, as a most dangerous illusion. To seek for dominion over others, he used to say, is a strong mark of reprobation. Thomas of Kempis mentions several other remarks of his master Florentius, which show him to have possessed both great piety, and great good sense.

The whole of the third and last part of the writings of Thomas of Kempis, is employed in the biography of Florentius, and his other contemporaries in the society, which we have mentioned: he does not forget their cook, of whose humility, incessant prayer, and incessant industry in his occupation, he gives a very pleasing account. They are short and simple annals: but they record much religious and much useful virtue; much, by which God was honoured, and man was served.

V.

When he attained his nineteenth year, Thomas of Kempis determined to *enter into the order of St. Augustin*. A respectable tradition deduces that order from the celebrated Doctor of the church of that name. Till the eleventh century, the monks of St. Augustin seem to have been little more than a voluntary association of ecclesiastics: about that time they were fixed into a permanent order. They exercised a variety of ecclesiastical functions, and their public schools for the instruction of youth were particularly esteemed. Florentius encouraged Thomas of Kempis in his resolution to enter among them. He observed to him, that both a life of action, and a life of contemplation, were approved by Christ; that the state which united them, was preferable, and should therefore, without a special call to one of them, be preferred to either. “But,” said Florentius, “you are not

“ to suppose, that a monastic life is a life of idleness. The prayers of a good religious man are incessant; his fasts are frequent; his sleep short, and often interrupted; and what remains of his time, is employed in manual labour.”

Thomas of Kempis was overjoyed to find that the opinion of his revered guide accorded with his own. He told Florentius, that he joyfully accepted his advice, and mentioned to him his wish to enter into a monastery of that order, recently established on the banks of the Vecht, near the town of Zwoll, of which, John of Kempis, the brother of Thomas, was, at that time, prior.—With a letter of Florentius, recommending him strongly to the community, he repaired to it immediately. It was a subject of great joy to the brothers, to meet in this manner: they devoutly recited the words of the Psalmist, “ O how good and joyful it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!”

Thomas of Kempis continued a novice during five years. It should seem, from some passages in his writings, that, during this time, he was visited with severe interior troubles. It is supposed by Valart, that, in the following passage, Thomas of Kempis, (if he were the author of *The Imitation*), relates an occurrence which happened to himself :

“ When a certain person, in anxiety of mind, was often wavering between hope and fear, and, on a time, being overwhelmed with grief, had prostrated himself in prayer in the church, before

“ an altar, he resolved these things within himself,
 “ saying,—If I did but know that I should still
 “ persevere!—And presently, he heard within him,
 “ an answer from God: *And if thou didst know*
 “ *this, what wouldst thou do? Do now, what*
 “ *thou wouldst then do, and thou shalt be very*
 “ *secure!* And immediately, being comforted and
 “ strengthened, he committed himself to the divine
 “ will, and his anxious wavering ceased. Neither
 “ had he a mind any more to search curiously to
 “ know what should befall him thereafter; but ra-
 “ ther studied to inquire what was the will of God,
 “ well pleasing and perfect, for the beginning and
 “ accomplishing of every good work.” Lib. 1.
 ch. 25. § 2.

VI.

From the time of his profession till his decease,
 a period of sixty-six years, Thomas of Kempis re-
 mained in the monastery of Zwoll, and in the con-
 tinual practice of every virtue of his state. He
 was visited by many and long interior trials and
 temptations: but his prayer, his self-denial, and his
 watchfulness over himself, were constant. Silence,”
 “ he says of himself, “ was his friend, labour his
 “ companion, prayer his auxiliary.” An interesting
 account of his progress in spirituality, seems to be
 given us by himself, in the 15th, 16th, and 17th
 chapters of his *Soliloquy of the Soul*. He begins
 it by mentioning his many sins and the great mercy

of God, in withdrawing him from his repeated infidelities, and healing the general deformity, as he terms it, of his soul.

Of his sins, he speaks in the strongest terms : but we must not understand his expressions in their strict sense : they are the language of a soul, whom God has raised to a view, not ordinarily given in this life, of his adorable perfections. Such a soul has an exquisite sense of the beauty, the wisdom and the justice of the divine will ; and, consequently, considers every deviation from it, though no greater than one of those failings, into which the just man falls seven times a day, as an act of heinous rebellion.

He mentions, that the spiritual delights, which he experienced, when he first dedicated himself to God, were very great : for God, he says, would not then visit him with great sufferings ; wisely considering, that the tender shoot, just brought under the shelter of his wings, would shrink at the first rough blast. By degrees God lovingly prepared him for the trials which he designed him : he showed him the conflicts, which the saints of the Old and New Testament sustained, their vigilance, their exertions, their constancy, their rewards. He declares that at first he was terrified, and seemed to sink under every wave, but God was always his refuge and support. “ Oh, how great,” he exclaims, “ hath been the mercy of God to me ! How often, when I was almost overcome, has he been my deliverer ! Some-

“ times my passions assailed me as a whirlwind ;
“ but God sent forth his arrows, and dissipated
“ them. The attack was often renewed, but God
“ was still my support. By degrees I was weaned
“ from every thing earthly, and adhered to God
“ alone. *Then* I experienced how sweet, how full
“ of mercy God is to those who truly love him.
“ O my God ! how merciful hast thou been to me !
“ Many have been forsaken by thee, and are lost,
“ who were less guilty than I am. But thy mer-
“ cies are unspeakable ! Let the worthless one,
“ (sayst thou), draw near to me, that he be made
“ worthy ; the wicked one, that he may be con-
“ verted ; the imperfect one, that he may be made
“ perfect : Let all draw near to me, and taste the
“ living waters of salvation. It is my delight to be
“ with the children of men.”

From *The Imitation of Christ*, (if we suppose him to have been the author of that work), it appears that he had frequently before his eyes, the abuse of human learning, and was too often obliged to see, that it was attended with the worst consequences.—On the same supposition, it also appears, that he was sometimes a subject of slander and obloquy : the third book of *The Imitation* abounds with passages, in which the bitterness of such a trial is feelingly acknowledged, and the sufferer beautifully exhorted to bear it silently and patiently.

Thomas of Kempis was successively promoted to

the office of bursar, master of novices, and sub-prior.—The first volume of his works contains his sermons: the greatest part of them are addressed to the novices. The reader must not expect to find in them the splendor, pathos, or dignified instruction of Massillon, Bossuet, or Bourdaloue: but he will find in them much solid precept, much, that invigorates his devotion, and many touches of piety by a master's hand. The same may be said of his other writings; but the greater part of them is rather for claustral, than for general use.

By degrees, his reputation for virtue and piety, got abroad: Many persons in the neighbourhood of the monastery, wished to place themselves under his spiritual direction; and numbers sought his pious and edifying conversation. But he avoided their visits, as much as it was in his power. At the first moment, that christian civility allowed, he took leave of company—saying, that “he must leave them, “as one was waiting for him in his cell.” What passed between him and the visitant of his cell, he himself has described, as far as language can describe it, in the 21st chapter of the third book of *The Imitation*. Every such hour was dearer to him than the last: “I have sought for rest every where,” he often said, towards the close of his life, “but I “found it no where, except in a little corner, with “a little book.”

He died on the 25th of July in the year 1471, in

the ninety-second year of his age. He is described to have been of small stature, well proportioned, and to have had a piercing eye: his biographers mention, that, when he sung the divine office in the choir, his countenance had a holy irradiation, which filled the spectators both with awe and piety.—His body was discovered in 1672.

AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF THE
REV. ALBAN BUTLER:
INTERSPERSED WITH
OBSERVATIONS ON SOME SUBJECTS
OF
SACRED AND PROFANE LITERATURE,
MENTIONED IN HIS WRITINGS.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
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REV. ALBAN BUTLER.

I.

THE REV. ALBAN BUTLER was the second son of Simon Butler, esquire, of Appletree, in the county of Northampton, by Miss Ann Birch, daughter of Thomas Birch, esquire, of Gorscot, in the county of Stafford. His family, for amplitude of possessions, and splendor of descent and alliances, had vied with the noblest and wealthiest of this kingdom, but was reduced to slender circumstances, at the time of his birth. A tradition in his family mentions, that Mr. Simon Butler (our Author's grandfather) was the person confidentially employed by the Duke of Devonshire, and the Earl of Warrington, in inviting the Prince of Orange over to England: that he professed the protestant religion, and that his great zeal for it was his motive for embarking so warmly in that measure; but that he never thought it would be attended with the

political consequences which followed from it ; that, when they happened, they preyed greatly on his mind ; that, to fly from his remorse, he gave himself up to pleasure ; and that, in a few years, he dissipated a considerable proportion of the remaining part of the family estate, and left what he did not sell of it, heavily encumbered.

At a very early age, our Author was sent to a school in Lancashire, and there applied himself to his studies with that unremitted application which, in every part of his life, he gave to literature. Sacred biography was even then his favourite pursuit. A gentleman, lately deceased, mentioned to the editor, that he remembered him at this school, and frequently heard him repeat, with a surprising minuteness of fact, and precision of chronology, to a numerous and wondering audience of little boys, the history of the chiefs and saints of the Saxon æra of our history. He then also was distinguished for his piety, and a punctual discharge of his religious duties.—About the age of eight years, he was sent to the English college at Douay. It appears, from the diary of that college, that Mr. Holman of Warkworth, (whose memory, for his extensive charities, is still in benediction in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire) became security for the expenses of his education. About this time he lost his father and mother. The latter, just before she died, wrote to him and his two brothers, the following beautiful letter :

“ MY DEAR CHILDREN,

“ Since it pleases Almighty God to take me out
“ of this world, as no doubt wisely foreseeing I am
“ no longer a useful parent to you, (for no person
“ ought to be thought necessary in this world, when
“ God thinks proper to take them out); so, I hope,
“ you will offer the loss of me, with a resignation
“ suitable to the religion you are of, and offer your-
“ selves. He who makes you orphans so young,
“ without a parent to take care of you, will take
“ you into his protection and fatherly care, if you
“ do love and serve him, who is the Author of all
“ goodness. Above all things, prepare yourselves,
“ while you are young, to suffer patiently what
“ afflictions he shall think proper to lay upon you ;
“ for it is by this he trieth his best servants. In
“ the first place, give him thanks for your education
“ in the true faith, (which many thousands want):
“ and then, I beg of you earnestly to petition his
“ direction, what state of life you shall undertake,
“ whether it be for religion, or to get your livings
“ in the world. No doubt but you may be saved
“ either way if you do your duty to God, your
“ neighbour, and yourselves. And I beg of you
“ to make constant resolutions, rather to die a
“ thousand times, if possible, than quit your faith ;
“ and always have in your thoughts, what you would
“ think of, were you as nigh death as I now think
“ myself. There is no preparation for a good death,
“ but a good life. Do not omit your prayers, and

“ to make an act of contrition and examen of con-
 “ science every night, and frequent the blessed sa-
 “ craments of the Church. I am so weak, I can
 “ say no more to you, but I pray God bless and
 “ direct you, and your friends to take care of you.
 “ Lastly, I beg of you never to forget to pray for
 “ your poor father and mother, when they are not
 “ capable of helping themselves : so I take leave of
 “ you, hoping to meet you in heaven, to be happy
 “ for all eternity—

“ Your affectionate Mother,

“ ANN BUTLER.”

Though our Author's memory, for the recol-
 lection of dates, was, in his very earliest years,
 remarkable, he found, when he first came to the
 college, great difficulty in learning his lessons by
 heart ; so that, to enable him to repeat them in
 the school as well as the other boys, he was obliged
 to rise long before the college hour. By perse-
 verance, however, he overcame this disheartening
 difficulty. Even while he was in the lowest schools,
 he was respected for his virtue and learning. One
 of his school-fellows writes thus of him : “ The
 “ year after Mr. Alban Butler's arrival at Douay,
 “ I was placed in the same school, under the same
 “ master, he being in the first class of rudiments,
 “ as it is there called, and I in the lowest. My
 “ youth and sickly constitution moved his innate
 “ goodness to pay me every attention in his power ;

“ and we soon contracted an intimacy that gave me
“ every opportunity of observing his conduct, and
“ of being fully acquainted with his sentiments.
“ No one student in the college was more humble,
“ more devout, more exact in every duty, or more
“ obedient or mortified. He was never reprov-
“ ed or punished but once; and then, for a fault of
“ which he was not guilty. This undeserved
“ treatment he received with silence, patience, and
“ humility. In the hours allotted to play, he re-
“ joiced in the meanest employments assigned to
“ him by his companions, as to fetch their balls, run
“ on their errands, &c. Though often treated with
“ many indignities by his thoughtless companions,
“ on purpose to try his patience, he never was ob-
“ served to show the least resentment, but bore all
“ with meekness and patience. By the frequent
“ practice of these virtues he had attained so perfect
“ an evenness of temper, that his mind seemed
“ never ruffled with the least emotion of anger.
“ He restricted himself, in every thing, to the
“ strictest bounds of necessity. Great part of his
“ monthly allowance of pocket-money, and fre-
“ quently of his daily food, went to the poor. So
“ perfectly had he subjected the flesh to the spirit,
“ that he seemed to feel no resistance from his
“ senses in the service of God and his neighbour.”

As he advanced in age, his learning and virtue became more and more conspicuous. Monsieur

Pellison*, in his life of the famous Huet, bishop of Avranches, observes, that, “ from his tender-
“ est youth, he gave himself to study ; that, at his
“ rising, his going to bed, and during his meals, he
“ was reading, or had others to read to him ; that
“ neither the fire of youth, the interruption of busi-
“ ness, the variety of his employments, the society
“ of his friends, nor the bustle of the world, could
“ ever moderate his ardour of study.” The same
may be said of our Author. He generally allowed
himself no more than four hours sleep, and often
passed whole nights in study and prayer. All his
day was spent in reading. When he was alone, he
read ; when he was in company, he read ; at his
meals, he read ; in his walks, he read ; when he
was in a carriage, he read ; when he was on horse-
back, he read ; whatever he did, he read. It was his
custom to make abridgments of the principal works
he perused, and to copy large extracts from them :
several bulky volumes of them have fallen into the
hands of the editor. Many were surprised to see
the rapidity with which he read, or rather run
through books, and, at the same time, acquired a
full and accurate knowledge of their contents.

II.

AFTER our Author had completed the usual
course of study, he was admitted an *Alumnus* of

* *Histoire de l'Academie*, 1 vol. 102.

Douay college, and appointed *Professor of Philosophy*. The Newtonian system of philosophy was, about that time, gaining ground in the foreign universities. He adopted it, in part, into the course of philosophy which he dictated to the students. He read and considered, with great attention, the metaphysical works of Woolfe and Leibnitz. He did not admire them, and thought the system of pre-established harmony laid down in them, irreconcilable with the received belief or opinions of the roman-catholic church on the soul; and that much of their language, though susceptible of a fair interpretation, conveyed improper notions, or, at least, sounded offensively to catholic ears. The late Mr. John Dunn, his contemporary at the college, frequently mentioned to the editor, the extreme caution which our Author used in inserting any thing new in his dictates, particularly on any subject connected with any tenet of religion. After teaching a course of philosophy, he was appointed *Professor of Divinity*. On this part of his life, the editor has been favoured by a gentleman deservedly famed for his erudition and piety, the Rev. Robert Bannister, with a long letter, of which the reader is presented with an extract.

“ I was contempory with Mr. Alban Butler in
“ Douay college, eight years; viz. from October
“ 1741 to October 1749. But as I was but a boy
“ the greater part of that time, I had not any inti-
“ macy with him, nor was I capable of knowing
“ any thing concerning his interior, the manner of

“ his prayer, or the degrees to which he ascended
“ in it, or any extraordinary communications or
“ elevations, to which the Holy Ghost, the great
“ master and teacher of contemplation, might raise
“ him. All that I can say, is, that he opened
“ Douay college’s great door to me and a gentleman
“ whom I knew not, but who was so good as to
“ bring me from Lisle in his coach, on Sunday
“ between 10 and 11, the 15th of October 1741;
“ and the first sight of him appeared to me then,
“ so meek and so amiable, that I thought I would
“ choose him for my ghostly father ; but another,
“ I suppose, in rotation, adopted me. Mr. Alban
“ was my sole master in my first year of divinity
“ in 1749, and dictated the two treatises *De Deca-*
“ *logo et de Incarnatione* ; he also presided over
“ my defensions upon those two treatises, and over
“ Mr. James Talbot’s (the late bishop of London)
“ upon universal divinity. As to heroic acts of
“ virtue, which strike with admiration all that see
“ or hear of them, I cannot recollect more, than
“ an uniform, constant observance of all the duties
“ of a priest, professor and confessarius. He was
“ always at morning meditations, seldom omitted
“ the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the mass,
“ which he said with a heavenly-composure, sweet-
“ ness, and recollection ; studying and teaching
“ assiduously, dictating with an unwearied patience
“ so equally and leisurely, that every one could, if
“ he wished to do it, write his dictates, in a clear
“ and legible hand ; nor do I remember, that he

“ ever sent a substitute to dictate for him ; so exact
“ and punctual he was in his duty as a professor.
“ I never knew one more ready to go to the con-
“ fession-seat, at the first intimation of any, even
“ the least or youngest boy. He heard his peni-
“ tents with wonderful meekness ; and his penetra-
“ tion, learning, judgment, and piety, were such,
“ as to move them to place in him a singular confi-
“ dence. He frequently visited the military hospi-
“ tal, to instruct, exhort, and hear the confessions
“ of Irish soldiers. He sometimes assembled a num-
“ ber of them, (when they happened to be quartered
“ in Douay,) in the college-church of St. Thomas
“ of Canterbury, and preached to them. In one
“ of his sermons, I remember he told them, for
“ their example and encouragement, that there are
“ more soldiers saints, than of any other vocation,
“ or state, or condition. As poor, and often dis-
“ ressed, Irish men and women, frequently came to
“ Douay, he was always ready to relieve them, and
“ administer both corporal and spiritual succours.
“ It can never be forgotten, what attention, solici-
“ tude, and care, he had in the year 1745, of our
“ English soldiers, wounded and maimed, who were
“ brought prisoners to Douay, and quartered in the
“ barracks, in great numbers, after the battle of
“ Fontenoy. He animated, both by words and
“ example, all the young priests, and all in holy
“ orders at the college, to visit them, to instruct
“ and instil into them serious thoughts of saving

“ their souls, by embracing the only saving faith,
“ and by true repentance. He also procured for
“ them temporal succour and relief, so beneficently,
“ that the duke of Cumberland, then generalis-
“ simo of the British and allied armies, being in-
“ formed of it, promised him a special protection,
“ whensoever he came over into England. Scarce
“ any thing affords one a better proof of Mr. Al-
“ ban’s eminent spirit of piety, and great under-
“ standing, discretion, and light in spiritual matters,
“ than his familiarity and friendship with M. Jean
“ Baptiste de Villêrs, president of the seminary des
“ Evêques in the university of Douay, who died
“ October 7th, 1746, the death of a saint, after
“ having lived the life of one for 78 years. This M.
“ de Villêrs was eminent in all supernatural and
“ moral virtues, but he concealed them under an
“ amiable simplicity, and a plain unaffected behavi-
“ our, or exterior, unless charity and zeal for the
“ glory of God and salvation of souls required their
“ open and full exertion ; and, notwithstanding his
“ great learning, (which he had acquired by an ex-
“ cellent genius and diligent application to sacred
“ studies) and his great and solid fund of piety,
“ he was as docile as an infant ; so timorous and
“ diffident of his own judgment, that he would nei-
“ ther do nor decide any thing without counsel.
“ With this sentiment of diffidence and humility,
“ he often visited (says M. Leroy, the faithful imi-
“ tator and writer of the history of his life), a young

“ professor, a foreigner, (that is, Alban Butler) and
 “ passed an hour or two in his company in the af-
 “ ternoon, once every week, and sometimes twice,
 “ several years until his edifying death. Their con-
 “ versation together was solely about various points
 “ of morality ; about the direction of souls, and the
 “ methods of arriving at perfection in every action
 “ and intention ; how to teach devout persons a habit
 “ of making continual aspirations to God, by acts
 “ of love, oblation, entire sacrifice of their hearts,
 “ of humility, &c. Mr. de Villèrs would not suffer
 “ more than half a small fagot to be kindled for him
 “ in the severest weather, saying to Mr. Alban,
 “ the other part may serve some poor person :” As
 “ to wine, or any other liquor, he never drank any
 “ but at meal-time. I remember to have heard an
 “ instance of Mr. Alban’s meekness, for I am not
 “ a witness of it. When he was presiding over one
 “ of his students in divinity in the public hall of
 “ Douay college, a disputant, who was probably much
 “ offended at some proposition in the thesis, as
 “ being opposite to some favourite opinion of his
 “ school or religious family, said to him, with into-
 “ lerable rudeness, *habes mel in ore, sed fêl in*
 “ *corde* : to which he made no reply, nor showed
 “ the least resentment. Mr. Alban Butler was
 “ totally averse to the system of probabilism, and
 “ to all assertions that favour laxity in morals. This
 “ is evident from the dictates which he deliver-
 “ ed to us, from his treatise *De Decalogo, de*

“ *actibus humanis*, in his *Epitome moralis sacra-*
 “ *mentorum*, &c. It is still more evident, from his
 “ *Epitome de sex prioribus conciliis œcumenicis*
 “ *in calce tractatus de Incarnatione*, that he had
 “ the highest veneration for the Holy See, and for
 “ him who sits in the chair of St. Peter ; that he
 “ constantly held and maintained the rights and
 “ singular prerogatives of St. Peter and his suc-
 “ cessors, in calling, presiding over, and confirming
 “ general or œcumenical councils ; the pope’s supe-
 “ riority over the whole church, and over the whole
 “ college of bishops, and over a general council ;
 “ the irreformability of his doctrinal decisions in
 “ points of faith and morals ; his supreme power to
 “ dispense, (when there is cause) in the canons of
 “ general councils ; in short, the plenitude of his
 “ authority over the whole church without excep-
 “ tion or limitation, *Nihil excipitur ubi distingui-*
 “ *tur nihil.*”

III.

FROM the letter, of which we have presented
 the reader with an extract, it appears what our
 Author’s sentiments were on the nature and extent
 of the spiritual power of the see of Rome. It has
 frequently been said, that he was the editor of
 Dr. Holden’s *Analysis Fidei* : had this been the
 fact, it would have been a strong proof of an
 alteration of his sentiments on those points ; but,

after particular inquiry, the editor finds the assertion to be wholly unfounded.

On the celebrated questions, *Of the infallibility of the pope, and his right to the deposing power*, our Author thus expresses himself in one of his letters on Mr. Bower's History of the Popes :
“ Mr. Bower having been educated in the catholic
“ schools, could not but know, that, though some
“ private divines think that the pope, by the assist-
“ ance of some special providence, cannot err in
“ the decisions of faith solemnly published by him,
“ with the mature advice of his council, or of the
“ clergy or divines of his church, yet, that this is
“ denied by others ; and that the learned Bossuet,
“ and many others, especially of the school of Sor-
“ bonne, have written warmly against that opinion ;
“ and that no catholic looks upon it as an article or
“ term of communion. It is the infallibility of the
“ whole church, whether assembled in a general
“ council, or dispersed over the world, of which
“ they speak in their controversial disputations.
“ Yet, this writer, at every turn, confounds these
“ two things together only to calumniate, and im-
“ pose on the public. If he had proved that some
“ popes had erred in faith, he would have no more
“ defeated the article of supremacy, than he would
“ disinherit a king by arraigning him of bad policy.
“ The catholic faith teaches the pope to be the
“ supreme pastor of the church established by
“ Christ, and that this church, founded by Christ

“ on a rock, shall never be overcome by hell, or
“ cease to be his true spouse. For he has promised,
“ that his true Spirit shall direct it in all truth
“ to the end of the world. But Mr. Bower
“ never found the infallibility of the pope in our
“ creed ; and knows very well that no such article
“ is proposed by the church, or required of any
“ one. Therefore the whole chain of his boastings
“ which is conducted through the work, falls to
“ the ground.

“ What he writes against the deposing power in
“ popes, certainly cannot be made a reproach
“ against the catholics of England, France, Spain,
“ &c. It is a doctrine neither taught nor tolerated
“ in any catholic kingdom that I know of, and
“ which many catholics write as warmly against as
“ Mr. Bower could wish.”——

IV.

WHILE our Author continued at the college of Douay, his first publication made its appearance : This was his *Letters on the History of the Popes, published by Mr. Archibald Bower*. That gentleman had entered into the society of Jesus, and acquired a reputation for learning and talents. He came into England, embraced the religion of the established church, and endeavoured to recommend himself to the favour of his new friends, by his *History of the Lives of the Popes*. He also pub-

lished an account of his escape from Italy, and of his motives for quitting it. The truth of the account became a subject of controversy. It was disbelieved, not only by catholics, but protestants. Dr. Douglas, the late bishop of Salisbury, wrote an excellent pamphlet to expose its falsehood and absurdity. It carried great improbability on the face of it. Mr. Bower was a lively writer, and defended himself with adroitness; but he was not equal to the composition of the history which he undertook to write. He was of the numerous list of authors, who, when they sit down to write, have to learn what they shall write, rather than to write what they have already learned. The errors which our Author exposes in his letters are sometimes the errors of a very young writer. The letters are written with ease and good humour; they show various and extensive learning, a vigorous and candid mind. They met with universal applause.

V.

IN the year 1745, our Author accompanied the late Earl of Shrewsbury and the Honourable James Talbot and Thomas Talbot on their *travels through France and Italy*. He wrote a full, entertaining and interesting account of them. As it has been published, the editor makes no extracts from it in this place. He was always solicitous, that the noble

personages committed to his care should see whatever deserved attention, and be introduced to persons distinguished by their rank, talents, or virtue. He drew out for them a comparative view of the Greek, Roman, and Gothic architecture, an account of the different schools of painting, and an abridgment of the lives, and remarks on the different characters, of the most eminent painters. These will be found in his travels. He kept them from all stage-entertainments :—" The stage entertainments," (he says in one of his letters), " I can give no account of, as
 " we never would see any ; they being certainly
 " very dangerous, and the school of the passions
 " and sin, most justly abhorred by the church and
 " the fathers. Among us, Collier, Law, &c. among
 " the French, the late prince of Conti, Dr. Voisin,
 " Nicole, &c. have said enough to satisfy any christian ; though Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Chrysostom, are still more implacable enemies of the
 " stage. However, we saw the stages, for their architecture, where this was curious." His opinion of the evil tendency of stage-entertainments continued with him through life.

XVI

ON his return from his travels, *our author was sent on the English Mission.* He had long been engaged in his great work of the *LIVES OF THE SAINTS*, and was then bringing it to a conclusion.

He naturally, therefore, wished to be settled in London, for the convenience of its public libraries, and the opportunities it affords of intercourse with men of letters. But the vicar-apostolic of the middle district claimed him, as belonging to that district, and appointed him to a mission in Staffordshire. This was a severe mortification to our Author; he respectfully remonstrated; but the vicar-apostolic was inexorable, and required his immediate obedience. A gentleman, who lived in the same house with him at the time, has mentioned to the editor, that he was with him when the summons came; and that, on receiving it, he appeared much hurt, retired for half an hour to his oratory, and soon after set off for his country mission.

From Staffordshire he removed to Warkworth, the seat of Francis Eyre, esquire, to whom these sheets were dedicated. He had the highest opinion of a good missionary, and frequently declared, that he knew of no situation so much to be envied, while the missionary had a love of his duties, and confined himself to them; none so miserable, when the missionary had lost the love of them, and was fond of the pleasures of life: "Such a one," he used to say, "would seldom have the means of gratifying his taste for pleasure; he would frequently find, that, in company, if he met with outward civility, he was the object of silent blame; and that, if he gave pleasure as a companion, no one would resort to him as a priest." He had a manuscript,

written by a Mr. Cox, an English missionary who lived in the beginning of the last century, in which these sentiments were expressed forcibly and with great feeling : he often mentioned it. But no person was less critical on the conduct of others, none exacted less from them, than our Author. He was always at the command of a fellow clergyman, and ready to do him every kind of good office. To the poor his door was always open. When he resided in London, in quality of chaplain to the duke of Norfolk, he was under no obligation, strictly speaking, of attending to any person except the duke himself and his family ; but he was at the call of every one who wanted any spiritual or temporal assistance which it was in his power to afford. The poor at length flocked to him in such numbers, that, much in opposition to his wishes, his brother, with whom he then lived, was obliged to give general orders that none of them should be admitted to him. He was ever ready to oblige. Mons. Olivet relates of Huet, the bishop of Avranches, that he was so absorbed in his studies, as sometimes to neglect his pastoral duties ; that once a poor peasant waited on him respecting some matter of importance, and was refused admittance, “ his lordship “ being at his studies ;” upon which the peasant retired, muttering, with great indignation, “ that “ he hoped they should never have another bishop “ who had not finished his studies before he came “ among them :” but our Author’s “ being at his

“ studies,” was never a reason with him for refusing to see any one. It was often unpleasant to observe how much his good humour in this respect was abused.

VII.

OUR Author did not remain long in Staffordshire — Edward duke of Norfolk, (to whom the late duke was second in succession), applied to the late Mr. Challoner for a person to be his chaplain, and to *superintend the education of Mr. Edward Howard*, his nephew and presumptive heir. Mr. Challoner fixed upon our author to fill that situation. His first residence, after he was appointed to it, was at Norwich, in an house generally called the duke’s palace. Thither some large boxes of books belonging to him were directed, but by mistake were sent to the bishop’s palace. The bishop opened them, and, finding them full of roman-catholic books, refused to deliver them. It has been mentioned, that, after the battle of Fontenoy, our Author was very active in serving the English prisoners, and that the duke of Cumberland returned him thanks for his conduct, and made him an offer of his services, if he should have occasion for them after his return to England. On this seizure of his books, our Author applied to the duke; his highness immediately wrote to the bishop, and soon after the books were sent to their owner.

Mr. Edward Howard, by our Author’s advice, was

first sent to the school of the English clergy, at a small village near Douay, called Esquerchin, of which the most pious and respectable Mr. Tichborne Blount was president. After some years, he was sent to complete his education at Paris; and thither our Author accompanied him. Mr. Edward Howard was the Marcellus of the English catholics: never did a noble youth raise greater expectations; but he was suddenly taken ill, and died after an illness of a few days. On that melancholy occasion the family expressed great pleasure in the recollection of the religious education he had received from our Author.

VIII.

DURING our Author's stay at Paris, he finally completed and sent to the press his great work on the *Lives of the Saints*. We have seen, that, from his tenderest years, he had discovered his turn for sacred biography. At a very early period of his life he conceived the plan of his work; and from that time pursued it with undeviating attention. He qualified himself for an able execution of it, by unremitted application to every branch of profane or sacred literature connected with it. He was a perfect master of the Italian, Spanish, and French languages. The last he spoke and wrote with fluency and purity. He was also perfect master of the Latin and Greek languages. At an advanced period of his life, he mentioned to the editor, that

he could then understand the works of St. John Chrysostom as easily in the original as in the Latin interpretation; but that the Greek of St. Gregory Nazianzen was too difficult for him. A few years before he died, he amused himself with an inquiry into the true pronunciation of the Greek language, and in preparing for the press some sheets of an intended Greek grammar. To attain that degree of knowledge of the Greek language is given to few: Menage mentions, that he was acquainted with three persons only who could read a Greek writer without an interpreter. Our Author had also some skill in the oriental languages. In biblical reading, in positive divinity, in canon law, in the writings of the fathers, in ecclesiastical antiquities, and in modern controversy, the depth and extent of his erudition are unquestionable. He was also skilled in heraldry: every part of ancient and modern geography was familiar to him. He had advanced far beyond the common learning of the schools, in the different branches of philosophy; and even in botany and medicine, he was deeply read. In this manner he had qualified himself to execute the work he undertook.

IX.

THE present section is intended to give *an account of some of the principal works he consulted in the composition of it.* It will contain, 1st, some remarks on the attention of the church,

during the early ages of Christianity, to preserve the memory of the martyrs and saints : 2dly, some account of the acts of the martyrs : 3dly, some account of the sacred calendars : 4thly, some account of the martyrologies : 5thly, some account of the Menæon and Menologies of the Greek church : 6thly, some account of the early Agiographists : 7thly, some account of the Bollandists : and, 8thly, some account of the process of the beatification and canonization of saints.

IX. 1. The roman-catholic church has ever been solicitous, *that the lives and miracles of those who have been eminent for their sanctity, should be recorded for the edification of the faithful.* St. Clement the second, successor of St. Peter in the see of Rome, is said to have divided the fourteen districts of that city among seven notaries, assigning two districts to each of them, with directions to form a minute and accurate account of the martyrs who suffered within them. About 150 years from that time, pope Fabian put the notaries under the care of deacons and subdeacons. The same attention to the actions and sufferings of the martyrs was shown in the provinces. Of this, the letter of the church of Smyrna, giving an account of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, the letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, giving an account of the martyrs who suffered in those cities, and the letter of St. Dionysius the bishop of Alexandria, to Fabius the bishop of Antioch, on the martyrs who suffered

under the emperor Decius, are remarkable instances. “ Our ancestors,” says Pontius, in the beginning of the acts of St. Cyprian, “ held those who suffered “ martyrdom, though only catechumens, or of the “ lowest rank, in such veneration, as to commit to “ writing almost every thing that related to them.” Nor was this attention confined to those who obtained the crown of martyrdom. Care was taken that the lives of all should be written, who were distinguished by their virtues, particularly if they had been favoured with the gift of miracles.

IX. 2. The lives of the martyrs and saints, written in this manner, were called *their acts*. They were often collected into volumes. One of the earliest of these collections was made by Eusebius, the father of church history. Some of the lives he inserted in the body of his great historical work : he also published a separate collection of them ; it was greatly esteemed, but has not reached our time : many others were published. These accounts of the virtues and sufferings of the martyrs were received by the faithful with the highest respect. They considered them to afford a glorious proof of the truth of the christian faith, and of the holiness and sublimity of its doctrines. They felt themselves stimulated by them to imitate the heroic acts of virtue and constancy which they placed before their eyes, and to rely on the assistance of Heaven, when their own hour of trial should arrive. Thus the vocal blood of the martyrs was a powerful

exhortation, both to induce the infidel to embrace the faith of Christ, and to incite the faithful to the practice of its precepts. The church, therefore, always recommended the frequent reading of the acts of the martyrs, and inserted the mention of them in her liturgy. This Ruinart proves by many examples: he also shows, that the greatest care was taken to procure the genuine acts of the martyrs; or, when they could not be had, to procure exact accounts of their trials and sufferings. By this means the church was in possession of authentic histories of the persecutions she had suffered, and through which she had finally triumphed over paganism, and of particular accounts of the principal sufferers. The greatest part of them was lost in the general wreck, which sacred and profane literature suffered from the barbarians who overturned the Roman empire. In every age, however, some were found who carefully preserved whatever they could save, of those sacred treasures. Copies were frequently made of them; and thus, in this, as in every other important branch of christian learning, the chain of tradition has been left unbroken. Much however of these sacred documents of church history has been irretrievably lost; and, speaking generally, the remaining part came down to us in an imperfect state. Hence Vives, at the end of the 15th century, exclaimed, "What a shame it is to
" the christian world, that the acts of our martyrs
" have not been published with greater truth and

“ accuracy !” The important task of publishing them in that manner was at length undertaken by Dom Ruinart, a Maurist monk, in his *Acta primorum Martyrum sincera et selecta*. He executed it in a manner that gained him universal applause. His prefatory discourse, respecting the number of martyrs, has been generally admired. An invaluable accession to this branch of sacred literature was published by Stephen Evodius Assemani, in two volumes folio, at Rome in 1748. The title of the work expresses its contents : “ *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum orientalium et occidentalium, editore Stephano Evodio Assemano, qui textum Chaldaicum recensuit, notis vocalibus animavit, Latine vertit, et annotationibus illustravit.*”

It is to be observed, that the eastern and western martyrs mentioned in this place, are not the martyrs of the eastern or Greek church, and the martyrs of the Latin or western church, in which sense the words eastern and western are generally used by ecclesiastical writers. By the eastern martyrs, Assemani denotes the martyrs who suffered in the countries which extend from the eastern bank of the Euphrates, over Mesopotamia and Chaldea, to the Tigris and the parts beyond it ; by the western, he denotes the martyrs who suffered in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Stephen Assemani was the nephew of Joseph Assemani, whose Kalendarium will be mentioned in another place. Joseph was first præfect of the Vatican library : Stephen

was archbishop of Apamea ; both of them were Maronite monks, and sent into the east by pope Clement the twelfth, to purchase manuscripts.

IX. 3. It was the pious custom of the early christians, to celebrate yearly the memory of the martyrs, on the days on which they suffered. On that day, the martyr was considered to be born to a life of glory and immortality, and, with respect to that second life, it was called the day of his birth. The different churches therefore were careful to preserve an exact account of the particular days on which the martyrs obtained the crown of martyrdom. The book which contained this account was called a *calendar*. At first the calendar contained the mention of the martyrs only ; but, in the course of time, the confessors, or those who, without arriving at the glory of martyrdom, had confessed their faith in Christ by their heroic virtues, were admitted to the same honour. The calendars were preserved in the churches ; a calendar of the church of Rome was published by Boucher ; another by Leo Allatius ; a third by Joannes Fronto, chancellor of Paris, and canon regular of the church of St. Genevieve at Paris. A most ancient calendar of the church of Carthage was published by Mabillon. But under this head no publication is more respectable than Joseph Assemani's *Kalendaria Ecclesiæ universæ notis illustrata*.

IX. 4. The calendars gave rise to the *martyrologies* ; the object of them was to collect, in one

volume, from the calendars of the different churches, the names of the martyrs and confessors throughout the world, with a brief mention of the day of their decease, and the place in which they suffered, or which they had illustrated by their birth, their residence, their rank, or their virtues. The Roman martyrology is mentioned in the following terms, by St. Gregory (Lib. 8. Epist. Indict. I.) in a letter to Eulogius, the bishop of Alexandria. “ We,” says his holiness, “ have the names of almost all the
“ martyrs collected into one volume, and referred
“ to the days on which they suffered, and we celebrate the solemn sacrifice of the mass, daily in
“ their honour. But our calendar does not contain
“ the particulars of their sufferings ; it only mentions their names, and the place and time of their
“ martyrdom.” The Roman calendar seems to have been adopted generally through the western church. It certainly was received in England. At the council held at Shovesham in 747, by Cuthbert, the archbishop of Canterbury, it was ordered, “ That,
“ throughout the year, the feasts of the saints should
“ be celebrated on the days appointed by the martyrology of the church of Rome, with the proper
“ psalms.” It was once generally believed to have been composed by St. Jerom ; but this opinion is now universally rejected. It suffered much in the middle ages. Pope Gregory the thirteenth, immediately after he had completed the great work of reforming

the calendar, used the most earnest endeavours to procure a correct edition of the Roman martyrology. He committed the care of it to some of the most distinguished writers of his time on ecclesiastical subjects. Among them, Bellarmine, Baronius, and Gavant, deserve particular mention. With this edition, Baronius himself was not satisfied. He published another edition in 1586; and afterwards, at the instigation of cardinal Sirlet, published a still more correct edition, with notes, in 1598. He prefixed to his edition a dissertation, in which he appears to have exhausted the subject. A further correction of the Roman martyrology was made by pope Urban the eighth. They were all surpassed by that published by pope Benedict the fourteenth, at Cologne in 1751. But the most useful edition is that published at Paris, in 1661, by father Lubin, an augustinian friar. It is accompanied with excellent notes and geographical tables. Politus, an Italian divine, published in 1751 the first volume of a new edition of the Roman martyrology. It comprises the month of January, but the plan of annotation is so extended, that it fills 500 folio pages of the smallest print; from the time of Drackenborch's edition of Livy, so prolix a commentary had not been seen. Among other principal martyrologies, is that of the *venerable Bede*. After several faulty editions of it had appeared, it was correctly published by Henschenius and Papebrooch, and afterwards by Smith, at the end of his edition

of Bede's ecclesiastical history. Notwithstanding Bede's great and deserved celebrity, the martyrology of *Usuard*, a Benedictine monk, was in more general use; he dedicated it to Charles the Bald, and died about 875. It was published by Solerius at Antwerp, in 1714, and by Dom Bouillard in 1718; but the curious still seek for the earlier edition by Molanus, in 1568, as in the subsequent editions, some parts of it were omitted. Another martyrology of renown is that of *Ado*; he was archbishop of Vienne in Dauphinê, and died in 875. The best edition of it is that by Rosweyde, in 1613, published at Rome in 1745.—Such have been the exertions of the church of Rome, to perpetuate the memory of those who have illustrated her by their virtues. During the most severe persecutions, in the general wreck of the arts and sciences, in the midst of the public and private calamities which attended the destruction of the Roman empire, the providence of God always raised some pious and enlightened men, who preserved the deposit of faith, and transmitted to future times the memory of whatever had been most virtuous in former ages or their own.

IX. 5. *The Greek church* has also shewn great attention to preserve the memory of the holy martyrs and saints. This appears from her *Menæon* and *Menologia*. *The Menæon* is divided into twelve months, and each month is contained in a volume. All the saints, whose festivals occur in

that month, have their proper day assigned to them in it; the rubric of the divine office, to be performed on that day, is mentioned; the particulars of the office follow; an account of the life and actions of the saint is inserted; and sometimes an engraving of him is added. If it happen that the saint has not his peculiar office, a prose or hymn in his praise is generally introduced. The greater solemnities have an appropriate office. From this the intelligent reader will observe, that the Menæon of the Greeks is nearly the same as a work would be, which should unite in itself the missal and breviary of the roman-catholic church. It was printed in twelve volumes in folio at Venice. Bollandus mentions, that Raderus, a Tyrolese Jesuit, had translated the whole of the Menæon, and pronounced it to be free from schism or heresy.

The Menologium answers to the Latin martyrology. There are several Menologia, as, at different times, great alterations have been made in them. But the ground-work of them all is the same, so that they are neither wholly alike nor wholly different. A translation of a Menologium into Latin by cardinal Sirlet, was published by Henry Canisius, in the third volume of his *Lectiones Antiquæ*. The Greek original, with a new version, was published by Annibal Albani, at Urbino, in 1727. From these works it is most clear, that the Greek church invokes the saints, and implores their intercession with God: “*Haud obscuré ostendit,*” says Walchius, “*Græcos*

“*eo cultu prosequi homines in sanctorum ordinem ascriptos, ut illos invocent.*” Bib. Theologica, vol. iii. 668. From the Menæon and the Menologium, Raderus published a collection of pious and entertaining narratives, under the title of *Viridarum Sanctorum*. It is to be wished that some gentleman would employ his leisure in a translation of it. We should then be furnished, from the works of the Agiographists of the eastern church, with a collection of pious and instructing narratives, similar to those in the well known *Histoires choisies*. One of the most curious articles inserted in the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists, is the *Muscovite or Russian Calendar*, with the engravings of the saints. It was first published by father Possevin. He praises the Russians for the great attention to decency which they observe in their pictures and engravings of holy subjects. He mentions, that the Russians who accompanied him in his return to Rome, observed, with surprise, in the Italian paintings of saints, a want of the like attention. Father Papebrooch, when he cites this passage, adopts the remark, and loudly calls on Innocent the twelfth to attend to the general decency of all public paintings and statues. *A Greek calendar of the saints* in hexameter verse accompanies the Russian calendar, in the *Acta Sanctorum*; both are illustrated with notes by father Papebrooch.

IX. 6. We proceed to the *lives of the saints written by individuals*. For these our attention

must be first directed to the Agiographists of the Greek church. The 8th century may be considered as the period when Grecian literature had reached its lowest state of depression ; in the ninth, Bardas Cæsar, the brother of the empress Theodora, protected letters ; from that time they were constantly cultivated by the Greeks ; so that Constantinople, till it was taken by Mahomet, was never without its historians, poets, or philosophers. Compared with the writings of the ancients, their compositions seem lifeless and unnatural ; we look among them in vain either for original genius or successful imitation. Still they are entitled to our gratitude ; many of the precious remains of antiquity have come down to us only in their extracts and abridgments : and their voluminous compilations have transmitted to us much useful information which has no other existence. Sacred biography, in particular, has great obligations to them. The earliest work on that subject we owe to the care which the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus bestowed on the literary education of his son ; an example which, at the distance of about 600 years, was successfully rivalled by the elegant edition of the Delphin classics, published under the auspices of Lewis the fourteenth. But the Greek emperor had this advantage over the French monarch, that he himself was the author of some of the works published for the use of his son. In the first (published by Lerch and Reisch at Leipsic in 1751,) he describes the

ceremonial of the Byzantine court; the second (published by Banduri, in his *Imperium Orientale*,) is a geographical survey of the provinces, or, as he calls them, the *Themata* of the empire; the third, which some ascribe to the emperor Leo his father, describes the prevailing system of military tactics; the fourth delineates the political relations and intercourse of the court of Byzantium with the other states. His geonics, (published by Nicholas Niclas at Leipsic, in 1731, in two volumes 8vo.) were written with a view of instructing his subjects in agriculture. By his direction, a collection of historical examples of vice and virtue was compiled in fifty-three books, and *Simeon Metaphrastes*, the great logothete or chancellor of the empire, composed his lives of the saints. Several of them were published, with a Latin translation, by the care of Lipoman, the bishop of Verona. Cardinal Bellarmine accuses Metaphrastes of giving too much loose to his imagination: "He inserts," says the cardinal, "such accounts of conversations of the martyrs with their persecutors, and such accounts of conversions of by-standers, as exceed belief. He mentions many and most wonderful miracles on the destruction of the temples and idols, and on the death of the persecutors, of which nothing is said by the ancient historians." We next come to *Jacobus de Voragine*, a Dominican friar and archbishop of Genoa, in 1292. His *Golden Legend* was the delight of our ancestors, during the ages

which preceded the revival of letters. The library of no monastery was without it. Like the essays of Montaigne, it was to be found on the shelf of every private person ; and, for a long time after the invention of printing, no work more often issued from the press. After enjoying the highest degree of reputation, it lost much of its celebrity, in consequence of the *Lives of Saints* published by *Mombritius* in two immense volumes in folio, about the year 1480, from manuscripts in the library of the church of St. John of Lateran ; and in consequence of the *Lives of Saints* published by *Surius* a Carthusian monk. The first edition of *Surius's* work was published in 1570-1575, in six volumes ; the second appeared in 1578, the third and most complete was published, in twelve volumes, in 1615. That he frequently shews too much credulity, and betrays a want of taste, must be admitted ; but his works are allowed to breathe a spirit of piety ; his candour, and desire to be accurate, are discernible in every part of his writings ; and his learning, for the age in which he lived, was considerable. In *Ribadeneira* the line of ancient Agiographists respectably finishes.

While candour and good taste must allow, that, even in the best of the compilations we have mentioned, there is a great want of critical discernment, and that they are wholly deficient in elegance and the artificial beauties of composition, justice requires that their defects should not be exaggerated.

Still less should an intention to deceive, even on the pretence of edification, be imputed to them. Whatever may have been either the error or the criminality of some of her members, the church herself, in this, as in every other instance, has always inculcated the duty of sincerity and truth, and reprobated a deviation from them, even on the specious pretence of producing good. On this subject our author thus forcibly expresses himself, in one of his letters on Mr. Bower's History of the Lives of the Popes: "It is very unjust, to charge
" the popes or the catholic church, with coun-
" tenancing knowingly false legends; seeing all
" the divines of that communion unanimously con-
" demn all such forgeries, as lies in things of great
" moment, and grievous sins: and all the councils,
" popes, and other bishops, have always expressed
" the greatest horror of such villanies; which no
" cause or circumstances whatever can authorize,
" and which, in all things relating to religion, are
" always of the most heinous nature. Hence the
" authors, when detected, have been always punish-
" ed with the utmost severity. Dr. Burnet himself,
" says, that those who feigned a revelation at Basil,
" of which he gives a long detail, with false circum-
" stances, in his letters on his travels, were all burnt
" at stakes for it, which we read more exactly related
" by Surius in his commentary on his own times.
" The truth is, that many false legends of true
" martyrs were forged by heretics, as were those

“ of St. George, condemned by pope Gelasius, as
“ many false gospels were soon after the birth of
“ christianity, of which we have the names of near
“ fifty extant. Other wicked or mistaken persons
“ have sometimes been guilty of a like imposture.
“ A priest at Ephesus forged acts of St. Paul’s
“ voyages, out of veneration for that apostle, and
“ was deposed for it by St. John the evangelist, as
“ we learn from Tertullian. To instance examples
“ of this nature would form a complete history.
“ For the church has always most severely con-
“ demned all manner of forgeries. Sometimes the
“ more virtuous and remote from fraud a person is,
“ the more unwilling he is to suspect an imposture
“ in others. Some great and good men have been
“ imposed upon by lies, and have given credit to
“ false histories, but without being privy to the
“ forgery ; and nothing erroneous, dangerous, or
“ prejudicial, was contained in what they unwarily
“ admitted. However, if credulity in private his-
“ tories was too easy in any former age, certainly
“ scepticism and infidelity are the characters of this
“ in which we live. No histories, except those of
“ holy Scripture, are proposed as parts of divine
“ revelation or articles of faith ; all others rest
“ upon their bare historical authority. They who
“ do not think this good and sufficient in any
“ narrations, do well to suggest modestly their
“ reasons : yet may look upon them at least as
“ parables, and leave others the liberty of judging

“ for themselves without offence. But Mr. Bower
“ says, p. 177, ‘ The Roman breviary is the most
“ authentic book the church of Rome has, after
“ the Scripture ; it would be less dangerous, at
“ least in Italy, to deny any truth revealed in the
“ Scripture, than to question any fable related in
“ the breviary.’ Catholic divines teach, that every
“ tittle in the holy Scriptures is sacred, divinely
“ inspired, and the word of God dictated by the
“ Holy Ghost. Even the definitions of general
“ councils do not enjoy an equal privilege ; they
“ are indeed the oracles of an unerring guide in
“ the doctrine of faith ; which guide received,
“ together with the Scriptures, the true sense and
“ meaning of the articles of faith contained in them ;
“ and, by the special protection of the Holy Ghost,
“ invariably preserves the same by tradition from
“ father to son, according to the promises of Christ.
“ But the church receives no new revelation of
“ faith, and adds nothing to that which was taught
“ by the apostles. 2ndly, Its decisions are not
“ supernaturally infallible in matters of fact, as
“ scripture histories are, but only in matters of
“ faith. Nor do catholics say, that its expressions,
“ even in decisions of faith, are strictly dictated by
“ the Holy Ghost, or suggested from him, by any
“ immediate revelation or inspiration ; but only
“ that the church is directed by his particular
“ guidance according to his divine truths revealed
“ and delivered to his church by his apostles. As

“ to the Roman breviary, the prayers consist, for
“ the greatest part, of the Psalms, and other parts
“ of the holy Scriptures, to which the same respect
“ is due which we pay to the divine books. The
“ short lessons from the homilies, or other works
“ of approved fathers, especially those fathers who
“ are mentioned by Gelasius the first, in his
“ decree, carry with them the authority of their
“ venerable authors. As it was the custom in the
“ primitive ages to read, in the churches or assem-
“ blies, the acts of the most illustrious martyrs, of
“ which frequent mention is made in those of
“ St. Polycarp, &c. some short histories of the
“ martyrs and other saints, have been always in-
“ serted in the breviary, to which only an historical
“ assent is due, whence they have been sometimes
“ altered and amended. These are chiefly such as
“ are judged authentic and probable by the cardinals
“ Baronius and Bellarmine, who revised those
“ lessons, in the last correction under Clement the
“ eighth. Gavant, who was himself one of the
“ revisers of the breviary, and secretary to the
“ congregation, writes thus: [in Breviar. sec. 5.
“ c. 12. n. 15. p. 18.] ‘ The second lessons from
“ the histories of the saints were revised by Bellar-
“ mine and Baronius, who rejected what could be
“ justly called in question: in which difficult task
“ they thought it best to restore the truth of history
“ with the least change possible, and to retain those
“ things which had a certain degree of probability,

“ and had the authority of some grave voucher,
 “ though the contrary sentiment had perhaps more
 “ patrons.’ In computing the years of the popes,
 “ the chronology of Baronius was judged the most
 “ exact, and retained. Historical facts, no ways
 “ revealed or contained in Scripture, cannot be made
 “ an object of divine faith. If edifying histories are
 “ inserted in the church-office, they stand upon
 “ their own credit. Such only ought to be chosen
 “ which are esteemed authentic. This rule has
 “ been always followed when any were compiled.
 “ If the compilers are found afterwards to have been
 “ mistaken, it is no where forbid to correct them*.
 “ This has been often done by the order of several
 “ popes.”

IX. 7. Among the modern collections of the *lives of saints*, of which our author availed himself, in the work we are speaking of, the histories which different religious have written of their own orders, hold a distinguished place. But he was indebted to no work so much as the *Acta Sanctorum of the Bollandists*. That noble collection was first projected by father Rosweyde of the Society of Jesus. He died before he had completely digested his plan. Fortunately for the lovers either of sacred history or sacred literature, it was taken up by father Bollandus of the same

* *Nimia profecto simplicitate peccant, qui scandalizantur quoties audiunt aliquid ex jam olim creditis, et juxta brevii prescriptum hodiedum recitandis, in disputationem adduci.* *Diss. Bollandicæ.* Vol. 2. p. 140.

society, and has been carried down to the 11th day of October, inclusive. Those who, after Bollandus's decease, succeeded him in his undertaking, were from him called Bollandists.

As far as the editor has been able to learn, the work was composed by the following authors, and published in the number of volumes and years following :

Months.	No. of Vols. all in fol.	Years of their appearance.	Authors.
January -	2.	1643	Bollandus and Henschenius.
February -	3.	1658	Bollandus and Henschenius.
March - -	3.	1668	Henschenius and Papebrochius.
April - -	3.	1675	Henschenius and Papebrochius.
May - -	7.	1680-1688	Henschenius, Papebrochius, Baertius, and Janningus.
June - -	6.	1695-1715	Henschenius, Papebrochius, Baertius, Janningus, and Sollerius.
July - -	7.	1719-1731	Janningus, Sollerius, Pinius, Cuperius, and Boschinus.
August -	6.	1733-1743	Sollerius, Pinius, Cuperius, Boschinus, and Stiltingus.
September	8.	1746-1762	Pinius, Stiltingus, Limpenus, Veldius, Suyskenius, Perierius, and Cleus.
October -	5.	1765-1786	Stiltingus, Suyskenius, Perierius, Byeus, Buæus, Ghesquierus, Hubenus, and Fronsonus.

Antwerp was the scene of the labours of the Bollandists. They were engaged on them, when the enemies of every thing sacred arrived there under Pichegrû. The most eminent of the Bollandists was Father Papebrooch, a rival of the Petauiuses, the Sirmonds, and Mabillons ; one of those men who exalt the character of the society to which they belong, and the age in which they live. The Spanish inquisition condemned some of the volumes in which he was concerned, but afterwards retracted the censure. Several dissertations, replete with various and profound erudition, are interspersed in the body of the work ; they are equally distinguished by the learning and the soundness and sobriety of criticism which appear in them. It would be an irreparable loss to the Christian world, that the work should not be completed. The principal dissertations have been printed, in three volumes folio, at Venice, in 1749-1759. Those who wish to see an account of the controversy which produced or was occasioned by the sentence of the inquisition, may consult the *Acta Eruditorum* 1696, p. 132-500.

IX. 8. Another source of information, of which our Author availed himself, in the composition of his work, was *the Acts of the Beatification and Canonization of the Saints*.

The name of *martyr* was given by the ancient church to those who had suffered death for the faith of Christ : the name of *confessor* was applied

to those who had made a public profession of their faith before the persecutors. It was afterwards extended to those who had edified the church by their heroic virtues. St. Martin of Tours is generally supposed to have been the first saint, to whom the title of confessor was applied in the last sense.

Originally, every bishop had the privilege of *canonizing* saints, or declaring them entitled to the honours which the catholic church bestows on her saints. The council of Cologne, cited by Ivo of Chartres, forbids the faithful to show any public mark of veneration to any modern saint, without the permission of the diocesan. A capitulary of Charlemagne in 801 is to the same effect.

Pope Alexander the third is supposed to have been the first pope who reserved the exclusive privilege of canonizing saints to the Holy See. It was recognized by the church of France at a council at Vienne, in which the bishops, addressing themselves to pope Gregory the ninth, expressly say, “that no sanctity, however eminent, authorizes the faithful to honour the memory of a saint, without the permission of the Holy See.”

The present mode of proceeding in the canonization of saints, principally takes its rise from the decree of pope Urban the eighth, dated the 13th March 1625. By that, he forbade the public veneration of every new saint, not beatified or canonized; and particularly ordered, that no one, even in private, should paint the image of any person, whatever

might be his reputation for sanctity, with a crown or circle of light round his head; or expose his picture in any sacred place, or publish an history of his life, or a relation of his virtues and miracles, without the approbation of his diocesan: That if, in a work so approved of, the person were called saint, or blessed, those words should only be used to denote the general holiness of his life, but not to anticipate the general judgment of the church. His holiness adds a form of protestation to that effect, which he requires the authors to sign, at the beginning and end of their works. This regulation of pope Urban is so strictly attended to, that a single proof of the infraction of it, and even the omission of a definite sentence that there has been no infraction of it, makes the canonization of the saint impossible, and invalidates the whole of the proceedings. The only exception is, in favour of those saints who are proved to have been immemorially venerated for 100 years and upwards, before 1634, the year in which pope Urban's bull was confirmed.

The beatification of a saint is generally considered as a preliminary to his canonization. It is a kind of provisional permission, authorizing the faithful to honour the memory of the person beatified; but qualified as to the place or manner. A decree of pope Alexander the eighth, in 1659, prohibits the faithful from carrying those honours farther than the bull of beatification expressly permits.

The proceedings of a beatification or canonization, are long, rigorous, and expensive :—*1st*, The bishop of the diocese institutes a process, in the nature of an information, to inquire into the public belief of the virtues and miracles of the proposed, and to ascertain, that the decree we have mentioned, of pope Urban the eighth has been complied with: this proceeding begins and ends with the bishop, his sentence being conclusive: *2dly*, the acts of this proceeding, with the bishop's sentence, are sealed up; then taken to the congregation of rites, and deposited with the notary: *3dly*, The solicitors for the congregation petition for publication of the proceedings: *4thly*, this is granted; and the proceedings, being first legally verified, are opened before the cardinal-president of the congregation: *5thly*, The pope is then requested to refer the business to a particular cardinal to report upon it: *6thly*, This being granted, the writings of the proposed, if he be the author of any, are laid before the cardinal reporter: *7thly*, he appoints a commission to assist him, and, with their assistance, makes his report. If one formal error against faith, one direct opinion contrary to morals, be found in them, it puts a total end to the proceedings, unless the author, in his life, expressly retracted it: “A general protestation,” says Benedict the fourteenth “the most sincere submission of all his opinions to the authority of the catholic church, saves the author from criminality, but

“ does not prevent the effect of this rigorous exclusion.” *8thly*, Hitherto the proceedings are not in strictness before the Pope ; but, from this stage of the business, the affair wholly devolves on his holiness. He signs a commission to the congregation of rites to institute and prosecute the process of beatification ; but, before this commission is granted, ten years must have expired, from the time when the acts of the diocesan were first lodged with the congregation of rites : *9thly*, The congregation of rites appoints commissaries, whom the pope delegates, to inform themselves of the virtues and miracles of the proposed. The commissaries usually are bishops, and the bishop of the diocese, where the proposed is buried, is usually one of them ; but laymen are never employed. The proceedings of the commissaries are secret, and carried on and subscribed with the strictest order and regularity, and in great form : the last step in their proceedings is to visit the tomb of the deceased, and to draw out a verbal process of the state in which his remains are found. The original of the proceedings is left with the bishops ; a legalized copy is taken of them, and returned by a sworn courier to the congregation of rites. *10thly*, The solicitors for the congregation then pray for what is called a decree of attribution, or that an inquiry may be made into each particular virtue and miracle attributed to the proposed : *11thly*, Upon this, they proceed to make the inquiry, beginning with

the virtues and ending with the miracles ; but, of the former, they can take no notice in this stage of the business, till fifty years from the time of the proposed's decease : in the case of a martyr, his martyrdom alone, with proof both of the heroism with which it was suffered, and of its having been suffered purely and absolutely in the cause of Christ, is supposed to make an inquiry into his virtues unnecessary. *12thly*, The final determination of the cause is settled in three extraordinary congregations, called the ante-preparatory, the preparatory, and the general. The virtues to be approved of, must be of the most heroic kind ; the number of miracles is, in strictness, limited to two. The pope collects the votes of the assembly ; and two thirds of it, at least, must agree in opinion, before they come to a resolution. He then pronounces what is called a private sentence before the promoter and the secretary of the congregation of St. Peter. *13thly*, A general congregation is then held, to determine whether it be advisable to proceed to the beatification of the proposed : *14thly*, Three consistories are afterwards held : *15thly*, The pope then signs the brief of beatification. The publication of it is performed in the church of the Vatican. The solicitor for the beatification presents the brief to the cardinal prefect ; he remits it to the cardinal archpriest of the church where the ceremony is held. The cardinal-archpriest reads it aloud ; the *Te Deum* is sung ;

collect in honour of the beatified is read, and mass is solemnized in his honour. 16^{thly}, When the proceedings for the beatification are completed, the proceedings for the canonization begin. But it is necessary, that, before any thing be done in them, new miracles should be wrought. When the solicitor for the canonization is satisfied that he can prove by judicial evidence the existence of these miracles, he presents a petition for resuming the cause. 17^{thly}, Three congregations extraordinary, a general assembly, and three consistories, are held for the purpose of pronouncing on the new miracles, and determining whether it be prudent to proceed to canonization: 18^{thly}, This being determined upon, the pope issues the brief of canonization, and, soon after, the ceremonial follows. It begins by a solemn procession; an image of the saint is painted on several banners. When the procession arrives at the church, where the ceremony is performed, the pope seats himself on his throne, and receives the usual homage of the court. The solicitor for the cause and the consistorial advocate place themselves at the feet of his holiness, and request the canonization; the litanies are sung; the request is made a second time; the *Veni Creator* is sung; the request is made a third time; the secretary announces, that it is the will of the pope to proceed immediately upon the canonization; the solicitor requests that the letters of canonization may be delivered in due form; his holiness

delivers them, and the first prothonotary calls on all the assembly to witness the delivery. The *Te Deum* is sung, and high mass is solemnized.

The decree of canonization is usually worded in these terms: “ To the glory of the Holy Trinity, “ for the exaltation of the catholic faith, and the “ increase of the christian religion: in virtue of “ the authority of Jesus Christ, of the holy apostles “ St. Peter and St. Paul, and our own, after due “ deliberation and frequent invocations of the heavenly light, with consent of our venerable brethren, the cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, and “ bishops, present at Rome, we declare the blessed “ N— to be a Saint, and we inscribe him, as such, “ in the Catalogue of the Saints. In the name of “ the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.”

Such is the outline of the process of canonization. It must be added, that the strictest evidence is required of every thing offered in proof. It is laid down as an universal rule, which admits of no exception, that the same evidence shall be required, through the whole of the process, as in criminal cases is required to convict an offender of a capital crime; and that no evidence of any fact shall be received, if a higher degree of evidence of the same fact can possibly be obtained. Hence, a copy of no instrument is admitted, if the original be in existence; no hearsay witness is received, if ocular testimony can be produced. The rigorous examination of every circumstance offered to be proved

has excited the surprise of intelligent protestants. Miracles, which to them seemed proved to the utmost degree of demonstration, have, to their surprise, been rejected. Whatever there is most awful in religion, most sacred in an oath, or most tremendous in the censures of the church, is employed in the process of canonization to elicit truth and detect falsehood. Every check and counter-check is used, which slowness of proceeding, or a repetition of it in other stages, and under different forms, can effect. The persons employed in it are the members of the roman-catholic church, the most exalted by their rank, and the most renowned for their virtues and talents. When the proceedings are concluded, they are printed and exposed to the examination of the whole world. The sixth volume of the celebrated treatise of Benedict the fourteenth on the beatification and canonization of saints, contains the acts of the saints canonized by himself.

X.

WITH these helps our Author sate down to his work. We may suppose him addressing to the saints, whose lives he was about to write, a prayer similar to the beautiful prayer addressed to them by Bollandus at the end of his general preface, and which may be thus abridged : “ Hail, ye citizens of
“ heaven ! courageous warriors ! triumphant over
“ the world ! From the blessed scenes of your

“ everlasting glory, look on a low mortal, who
“ searches every where for the memorials of your
“ virtues and triumphs. Show your favour to
“ him; give him to discover the valuable monu-
“ ments of former times; to distinguish the
“ spurious from the legitimate; to digest his work
“ in proper order and method; to explain and
“ illustrate whatever is obscure. Take under your
“ protection all who have patronized or assisted him
“ in his undertakings: obtain for all who read his
“ work, that they imitate the examples of virtue
“ which it places before their eyes; and that they
“ experience how sweet, how useful, and how
“ glorious it is to walk in your steps.”

In the preface to the French translation, the work is said to have cost our Author the labour of thirty years. It was his practice, when he began to write the life of any saint, to read over and digest the whole of his materials, before he committed any thing to paper. His work evidently shows, that his mind was full of its subject; and that what he wrote was the result of much previous information and reflexion. On many occasions he must have written on subjects which were new to him; but, such is the mutual connection and dependence of every branch of literature, that a mind, stored like his, was already in possession of that kind of knowledge, which would make him apprehend, with great ease, whatever he had to learn; and would instruct him, though the subject were new to him,

where he might express himself decisively, and where he should doubt. How extensive and profound his general knowledge was, appears from this, that a person who happens to have made any subject, treated of by him, his particular study, will seldom read what our Author has written upon it, without finding in it something original, or, at least, so happily expressed or illustrated, as to have the merit of originality. In some instances, as in his account of the Manichæans, in the life of St. Augustine, and of the crusades, in the life of St. Lewis, he shows such extent and minuteness of investigation, as could only be required from works confined to those subjects. In other instances, where his materials are scanty, so that he writes chiefly from his own mind, as in the lives of St. Zita or St. Isidore of Pelusium, he pours an unpremeditated stream of piety, which nothing but an intimate acquaintance with the best spiritual writers could produce.

The sameness of a great number of the most edifying actions which our Author had to relate, made it difficult for him to avoid a tiresome uniformity of narrative : but he has happily surmounted this difficulty. Another difficulty he met with, was the flat and inanimate style of the generality of the writers from whom his work was composed. Happy must he have been, when the authors he had to consult were St. Jerome, Scipio Maffei, Bouhours, or Marsollier. But most commonly they were such

as might edify but could not delight. He had then to trust to his own resources, for that style, that arrangement, those reflections, which were to engage his reader's attention. In this he has certainly succeeded. Few authors, on holy subjects, have possessed, in an higher degree, that indescribable charm of style which rivets the reader's attention to the book, which never places the writer between the book and the reader, but insensibly leads him to the conclusion, sometimes delighted, but always attentive and always pleased.

His style is peculiar to himself; it partakes more of the style of the writers of the last century, than of the style of the present age. It possesses great merit, but sometimes is negligent and loose. Mr. Gibbon mentioned it to the editor in warm terms of commendation; and was astonished when he heard how much of our Author's life had been spent abroad. Speaking of our Author's *Lives of the Saints*, (vol. iv. 457), he calls it "a work of merit,—
"the sense and learning belong to the author,—
"his prejudices are those of his profession."—As it is known what prejudice means in Mr. Gibbon's vocabulary, our Author's relatives accept the character.

Having lived so long in the schools, he must have had a strong predilection for some of the opinions agitated in them; and frequent opportunities of expressing it occurred in his work. He seems to have cautiously avoided them: a single instance,

perhaps, is not to be found, where any thing of the kind is discoverable in any of his writings. He has carefully brought before the reader every circumstance arising from his subject, that could be offered in proof or illustration of the particular tenets of the roman-catholic church ; but he does it without affectation, and rather leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions, than suggests them to him. Those expressions which good manners and good taste reject, are never to be found in his works.

But the chief merit of his works is, that they make virtue and devotion amiable : he preaches penance, but he shows its rewards ; he exhorts to compunction, but he shows the sweetness of pious sorrow ; he enforces humility, but he shows the blessedness of an humble heart ; he recommends solitude, but he shews that God *is*, where the world is not. No one reads his work who does not perceive the happiness, even in this world, of a holy life, or who does not wish to die the death of a saint. Most readers of it will acknowledge, that sometimes, at least, when they have read it, every worldly emotion has died within them, and they have felt themselves in a disposition of mind suited to receive the finest impressions of religion.

At the finishing of his work he gave a very edifying instance of humility. The manuscript of the first volume having been submitted to Mr. Chalonier, the vicar-apostolic of the London district, he recommended the omission of all the notes, not

excepting that beautiful note which gives an account of the writings of St. John Chrysostom. His motive was, that, by being made less bulky, the work might be made less expensive, and consequently more generally useful. It is easy to suppose what it must have cost our Author to consign to oblivion the fruit of so much labour and so many vigils. He obeyed, however, and to this circumstance it is owing, that, in the first edition, the notes in question were omitted.

XI.

XI. 1. It has been *objected* to our Author's work on the Lives of the Saints, *that the system of devotion which is recommended by it, is at best suited to the cloister.* But no work has ever appeared, in which the difference between the duties of a man of the world and the duties of a religious is more strongly pointed out. Whenever the Author has occasion to mention any action of any saint, which is extraordinary or singular in its nature, he always observes, that it is of a kind rather to be admired than imitated.

XI. 2. It has been objected, *that the piety which it inculcates, is of the ascetic kind,* and that the spirit of penance, voluntary mortification and contempt of the world, which it breathes every where, is neither required nor recommended by the gospel. But no difference can be found, between the spirit of piety inculcated by our Author, and that incul-

cated by the most approved authors of the roman-catholic church. Less of penance, of voluntary mortification, or of contempt of the world, is not recommended by Rodriguez, by Thomas of Kempis, by St. Francis of Sales, by Bourdaloue or Massillon, than is recommended by our Author. Speaking of those “ who confound nature with grace, and who “ look on the cross of Jesus Christ as an object “ foreign to faith and piety ;—It was not thus,” says Massillon, in his sermon on the Incarnation, “ it was not thus, that the apostles announced the “ gospel to our ancestors. *The spirit of the gospel* “ *is a holy eagerness of suffering, an incessant* “ *attention to mortify self love, to do violence to* “ *the will, to restrain the desires, to deprive the* “ *senses of useless gratifications ; this is the essence* “ *of christianity, the soul of piety.* If you have “ not this spirit, you belong not, says the apostle, “ to Jesus Christ ; it is of no consequence that you “ are not of the number of the impure or sacrilegious of whom the apostle speaks, and who will “ not be admitted into the kingdom of Christ. “ You are equally strangers to him ; your sentiments are not his ; you still live according to “ nature ; you belong not to the grace of our “ Saviour ; you will therefore perish, for it is on “ him alone, says the apostle, that the Father has “ placed our salvation. A complaint is sometimes “ made that we render piety disgusting and impracticable, by prohibiting many pleasures which

“ the world authorizes. But, my brethren, what
“ is it we tell you ? Allow yourselves all the pleasures which Christ would have allowed himself ;
“ faith allows you no other : mix with your piety
“ all the gratifications which Jesus Christ would
“ have mixed in his ; the gospel allows no greater
“ indulgence.—O my God, how the decisions of
“ the world will one day be strangely reversed !
“ when worldly probity and worldly regularity,
“ which, by a false appearance of virtue, give a deceitful confidence to so many souls, will be placed
“ by the side of the crucified Jesus, and will be
“ judged by that model ! To be always renouncing
“ yourselves, rejecting what pleases, regulating the
“ most innocent wishes of the heart by the rigorous rules of the spirit of the gospel, is difficult,
“ is a state of violence. But if the pleasures of
“ the senses leave the soul sorrowful, empty, and
“ uneasy ; the rigours of the cross make her
“ happy. Penance heals the wounds made by
“ herself ; like the mysterious bush in the Scripture, while man sees only its thorns and briars,
“ the glory of the Lord is within it, and the soul
“ that possesses him possesses all. Sweet tears of
“ penance ! Divine secret of grace ! O that you
“ were better known to the sinner.”——“ The
“ pretended esprits forts,” (says Bourdaloue, in his sermon on the scandal of the cross, and the humiliations of Jesus Christ, the noblest of all his sermons, in the opinion of the cardinal de Maury),

“ do not relish the rigorous doctrines announced
 “ by the Son of God in his gospel ; self-hatred,
 “ self-denial, severity to one’s self. But, when
 “ Christ established a religion for men, who were
 “ to acknowledge themselves sinners and criminals,
 “ ought he, as St. Jerome asks, to have published
 “ other laws ? What is so proper for sin as penance ?
 “ What is more of the nature of penance, than the
 “ sinner’s harshness and severity to himself ? Is
 “ there any thing in this contrary to reason ? They
 “ are astonished at his ranking poverty among the
 “ beatitudes ; that he held up the cross as an at-
 “ traction to his disciples to follow him ; that he
 “ declared a love of contempt was preferable to the
 “ honours of the world. In all this I see the depth
 “ of his divine counsels.”—Such is the language
 of Bourdaloue and Massillon preaching before a
 luxurious court, to the best informed and most
 polished audience in the christian world. It is
 apprehended that no other language is found in our
 author’s Lives of the Saints.

XI. 3. Some (but their number is small) have
 imputed to our author *too much credulity respecting
 miracles*. A chain of Agiographists might be sup-
 posed :—on the first link of it we might place
 Surius, as possessing the utmost degree of the
 belief of miracles consistent with any degree of
 judgment ; on the last, we might place Baillet and
 Launoy, as possessing the utmost degree of the
 belief of miracles, consistent with any degree of

deference to the general opinions of pious catholics. Between them we might place in succession, according to their respective degrees of supposed belief, Ribadeneira, Baronius, the Bollandists, Tillemont and Fleury. With which of these writers shall we class our author? Certainly neither with Surius, nor with Baillet or Launoy. The middle links represent those, to whom the most liberal roman-catholic will not impute too much credulity, or the most credulous too much freedom. Perhaps our author should rank with the Bollandists, the first of this middle class; and generally he who thinks with father Papebrooch on any subject of ecclesiastical literature, may be sure of thinking right. To those who wholly deny the existence of miracles, these sheets are not addressed: but the roman-catholic may be asked on what principle he admits the evidence for the miracles of the three first centuries, and rejects the evidence for the miracles of the middle age? why he denies to St. Austin, St. Gregory, the venerable Bede, or St. Bernard, the confidence he places in St. Justin, St. Iræneus, or Eusebius?

XII.

SOME years after our Author had published the *Lives of the Saints*, he published *the Life of Mary of the Cross*, a nun in the English convent of the poor Clares at Rouen. It is rather a vehicle to convey instruction on various important duties of a religious

life, and on sublime prayer, than a minute account of the life and actions of the nun. It was objected to this work, as it had been to the saints lives, that it inculcated a spirit of mystic prayer, the excesses of which had been formally condemned, and the propriety of which, even in a very qualified view of it, was doubtful.

It must be admitted by those who urge this objection, that, both in the saints lives and in the work of which we are speaking, our Author uses very guarded expressions. He always takes care to mention, that, in the practices of devotion, as in every other practice, the common is the safest road : that many of the greatest saints have, through the whole of their lives, confined themselves to the usual modes of prayer and meditation ; that the gift of contemplation is given to few ; that, like every other practice of devotion, contemplation has its dangers ; and that, without a perfect spirit of humility, it is much exposed to illusion : but he delivers at the same time an explicit opinion, that contemplation is a gift of Heaven ; that the happiness of a soul on whom God bestows it, is above description ; and that every joy which this life affords, is contemptible in comparison of it. This certainly is catholic doctrine.

It is natural to suppose, that, at a time when every art and science was deluged in a quantity of barbarous words, and metaphysics were carried into every subject, the doctrine of prayer would often be

involved in similar intricacies and refinements. The fact certainly is, that many writers of the middle age, on the subject of prayer, introduced into their writings a wonderful degree of metaphysical subtlety. But, if their doctrine be divested of those subtleties, and expressed in plain language, it will be found that nothing in what our Author, with other spiritualists, calls mystical theology, contradicts common sense. With them, he divides the progress of a christian, in his advances towards perfection, into three stages, the purgative, the contemplative, and the unitive. In the first stage he places sinners on their first entrance after their conversion, into a spiritual life ; who bewail their sins, are careful to avoid relapsing into them, endeavour to destroy their bad habits, to extinguish their passions ; who fast, watch, pray, chastise the flesh, mourn, and are blessed with a contrite and humbled heart. In the second stage he places those, who divest themselves of earthly affections, study to acquire purity of heart, and a constant habit of virtue, the true light of the soul ; who meditate incessantly on the virtues and doctrines of Christ, and thereby inflame themselves to the imitation of him. Those, he supposes to be arrived at the third stage, whose souls, being thus illuminated, are united to God and enjoy his peace, which passeth understanding. According to our Author, the prayer of a person, who is arrived at the last stage, is very different from that of a beginner in spiritual

life. To present a pious subject to his mind, to place it in the various points of view in which it should be considered, to raise the devout sentiments which the consideration of it should produce, and to form the resolutions which those sentiments should inspire, must, our Author observes, be a work of exertion to a beginner. But when once he has arrived at that state of perfection as to have detached himself from those objects which are the usual incitements to sin, and to which, from the natural propensity of the human heart, the imaginations of man forcibly lead, and when an ardent love of virtue, piety, and whatever relates to them, is habitual in her ;—then, our Author supposes that what before was exertion, becomes the usual state of the soul ; a thousand causes of distraction cease to exist, and all the powers of the mind and affections of the heart rest with ease and pleasure on the subject of her meditation : God communicates to her his perfections ; he enlightens her in the mysteries of religion, and raises in her admirable sentiments of wonder and love. This our Author calls the prayer of contemplation. In process of time, he supposes that the habit of devotion increases ; that the soul acquires a stronger aversion from every thing that withholds her from God, and a more ardent desire of being united to him ; and that, by continually meditating on the sublime truths and mysteries of christianity, she is disengaged from earthly affections, is always turned to God, and

obtains a clearer view of his perfections, of her obligations to him, and of the motives which entitle him to her love. Then, according to our Author, every thing, which is not God, becomes irksome to her, and she is united to him in every action, and every thought. At first the soul, by our Author's description, calls to her mind the presence of God ; afterwards she habitually recollects it ; at length every thing else disappears, and she lives in him. Even in the first stage, when the sinner first turns from vice, and determinately engages in the practice of a virtuous life, our Author pronounces that the comforts which she experiences in reflecting on the happiness of the change, exceed the joys of this world : he supposes her to say in the words of Bourdaloue (*sur la choix mutuel de Dieu et de l'ame religieuse.*) “ I have chosen God, and God
“ has chosen me ; this reflection is my support
“ and my strength, it will enable me to surmount
“ every difficulty, to resist every temptation, to
“ rise above every chagrin and every disgust.” From the moment this choice is made, he supposes, with the same eloquent preacher, (in his sermon for the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, “ that the
“ soul, exposed till then to all the vexations which
“ the love of the world inevitably occasions, begins
“ to enjoy a sweet tranquillity : conscience begins
“ to experience the interior joy of pious hope and
“ confidence in the mercies of God, and to feel the
“ holy unction of grace ; in the midst of her peni-

“ tential austerities she comforts and strengthens
“ herself by the thought that she is making some
“ satisfaction and atonement to God for her sins,
“ that she is purifying her heart, and disposing it
“ to receive the communications of Heaven.” This
comfort and sensation of happiness, he observes,
must necessarily increase as the charms of virtue are
unveiled to the soul, and she acquires a continual
habit of thinking on God. “ Who can express,”
he makes the soul exclaim with the same author,
“ the secret delights which God bestows on a heart
“ thus purified and prepared ! how he enlightens
“ her ! how he inflames her with divine love ! with
“ what visitations he favours her ! what holy sen-
“ timents and transports he excites in her ! ” But,
when she lives for God alone, then, in our Author’s
language, God communicates himself with her, and
her happiness, as far as happiness is attainable in
this life, is complete. Here, according to Thomas
of Kempis, (and what catholic refuses his autho-
rity ?), begins the *Familiaritas stupenda nimis*.
“ What is the hundred-fold of reward,” cries
Bourdaloue, (*sermon sur le renoncement reli-
gieuse*), “ that thou, O God, hast promised to the
“ soul which has left every thing for thee ? It is
“ something more than I have said upon it : it is
“ something that I cannot express : but it is some-
“ thing with which, sinful and weak as I am, God
“ has more than once favoured me.”—“ Thou
“ promisedst me a hundred-fold,” says St. Bernard,

“ I feel it ; thou hast more than performed thy
“ promise.” *Necessitas quod cogit, defendit.* In
defence of our Author, this short exposition of his
doctrine seemed necessary : and it may be con-
fidently asked, in what it differs from the doctrine
of Rodriguez, of St. Francis de Sales, of Bourdaloue,
or of many other authors, in whom the universal
opinion of the catholic world recognizes, not only
true devotion and piety, but extreme good sense
and moderation. Nor should it be forgotten, that,
if the prelates assembled at Issy in 1695, declared,
(Art. 22,) “ that, without any extraordinary de-
“ grees of prayer a person may become a very
“ great saint;” — they had previously declared,
(Art. 21), “ that, even those which are passive,
“ and approved of by St. Francis of Sales and other
“ spiritualists, cannot be rejected.” The authors
on these subjects, whom our Author particularly
recommended, were Balthazar Alvarez de Paz and
St. Jure. The latter was one of the jesuits who
came into England during the reign of Charles the
first. His most celebrated work is, a treatise on
the knowledge and love of God, in five volumes,—
a noble effusion of the sublimest piety. The only
work by which he is known in this country, is, his
Life of the Baron de Renty : Our Author esteemed
it much, but thought it censurable for mentioning,
in terms of commendation, the mode in which the
Baron, to save his honour, indirectly put himself in
the way of fighting a duel.

Another spiritualist, whom our Author greatly admired, was the celebrated Henry Marie de Boudon. He frequently mentioned, in terms of the highest admiration, the humility and resignation with which Boudon bore the calumnies of his prelate and fellow-clergy. He often related that part of his life, when, being abandoned by the whole world, a poor convent of religious received him into their house, and he knelt down to thank God, that one human being still existed, who was kindly disposed to him. His writings are numerous; the style of them is not elegant, and they abound with low expressions; but they contain many passages of original and sublime eloquence. Our Author was also a great admirer of the works of father Surin, particularly his *Fondemens de la Vie spirituelle*, edited by father Bignon. In this species of writing, few works perhaps will give the reader so much pleasure as the *Morale de l'Evangile*, in 4 vols. 8vo, by father Neuvile, brother to the celebrated preacher of that name. It is to be hoped that it will be translated into English*. Our Author

* For this and many other valuable works we naturally look to Stoneyhurst. If the *Musæ exulantes* §, in the swamps of Bruges, could produce an elegant and nervous translation of Cato, will their notes be less strong or less sweet in their native land? May we not expect from Stoneyhurst other Petaviuses, other Sirmonds, other Porces, future Strachans, future Stanleys, future Heskeys, future Stricklands. If any

§ The title assumed by them, in the preface to the Latin translation of Cato.

greatly lamented the consequences of the altercation between Fenelon and Bossuet. He thought the condemnation which had been passed in it, on the abuses of devotion, had brought devotion itself into

of them would favour us with a translation of father Montreuil's *Vie de Jesus Christ*, he would supply the English catholic with the present desideratum of his library, an interesting and accurate life of Christ. A literary history of the gospels, showing the state of the text, and the grammatical peculiarities of their idiom, and containing a short account of the early versions, would be an invaluable work. The excellent translation by Mr. Combes, the professor of divinity in St. Edmund's College, of selected parts of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom, shows his ability to execute such a work, and leads us to hope it from him. The mention of these gentlemen naturally makes us reflect on the singular kindness shown by this country to the foreign exiles. The editor begs leave to copy, what has been said by him on this subject in a small work, intitled *Horæ Biblicæ*. After mentioning some of the most splendid of the biblical exertions of the English, the compiler of that work says,—“ Yet, useful and magni-
 “ ficent as these exertions have been, an edition of the New
 “ Testament has lately appeared in this country, which, in
 “ one point of view, eclipses them all. It has been our lot to
 “ be witnesses of the most tremendous revolution that christian Europe has known: a new race of enemies to the
 “ christian religion has arisen, and from Rome to Hungary,
 “ has struck at every altar, and shaken every throne. One
 “ of their first enormities was, the murder of a large pro-
 “ portion of their clergy, and the banishment of almost the
 “ whole of the remaining part. Some thousands of those
 “ respectable exiles found refuge in England. A private
 “ subscription of 33,775*l.* 15*s.* 9½*d.* was immediately made
 “ for them. When it was exhausted, a second was col-

discredit, and thrown a ridicule on the holiness of an interior life. Of Fenelon he always spoke with the highest respect. One of the editors of the last edition of his works is now in England: he has

“ lected, under the auspices of his Majesty, and produced
“ 41,304*l.* 12*s.* 6¼*d.* Nor is it too much to say, that the
“ beneficence of individuals, whose charities on this occasion
“ are known to God alone, raised for the sufferers a sum
“ much exceeding the amount of the larger of the two sub-
“ scriptions. When at length the wants of the sufferers
“ exceeded the measure of private charity, government took
“ them under its protection, and, though engaged in a war,
“ exceeding all former wars in expense, appropriated, with
“ the approbation of the whole kingdom, a monthly allowance
“ of about 8,000*l.* for their support; an instance of splendid
“ munificence and systematic liberality, of which the annals
“ of the world do not furnish another example. The manage-
“ ment of the contributions was intrusted to a committee,
“ of whom Mr. Wilmot, then one of the members of parlia-
“ ment for the city of Coventry, was president: on him the
“ burden of the trust almost wholly fell; and his humanity,
“ judgment, and perseverance, in the discharge of it, did
“ honour to himself and his country.

“ It should be observed, that the contributions we have
“ mentioned are exclusive of those which were granted for
“ the relief of the lay emigrants.

“ So suddenly had the unhappy sufferers been driven from
“ their country, that few of them had brought with them any
“ of those books of religion or devotion, which their clerical
“ character and habits of prayer had made the companions of
“ their past life, and which were to become almost the chief
“ comfort of their future years. To relieve them from this
“ misfortune, the university of Oxford, at her sole expense,
“ printed for them at the Clarendon Press, two thousand

declared that it appeared from Fenelon's papers, that his exertions to the very last, to ward off the sentence of the condemnation of his works, were most active. This enhanced the value of his sacrifice. Our Author thought that Valart had abundantly proved that Thomas of Kempis was not the author of the Imitation of Christ; but that he had not proved it to be written by Gersen, the abbot of Vercelli: he also differed from Valart in his opinion of the general merit of the works of Thomas of Kempis; his treatises *de tribus tabernaculis* and *de verâ compunctione*, (the latter particularly) he thought excellent*.

“copies of the Latin Vulgate of the New Testament, from
 “an edition of Barbou; but this number not being deemed
 “sufficient to satisfy the demand, two thousand more copies
 “were added, at the expense of the Marquis of Buckingham.
 “Few will forget the piety, the blameless demeanor, the long
 “patient suffering of these respectable men. Thrown on a
 “sudden into a foreign country, differing from theirs in reli-
 “gion, language, manners, and habits, the uniform tenor of
 “their pious and unoffending lives, procured them universal
 “respect and good will. The country that received them
 “has been favoured. In the midst of the public and private
 “calamity, which almost every nation has experienced, Providence has crowned *her* with glory and honour; peace has
 “dwelt in her palaces, plenty within her walls; every climate
 “has been tributary to her commerce, every sea has been
 “witness of her victories.”

* Our Author was a great admirer of the writings of Abraham Woodhead; he purchased his manuscripts, and by his will bequeathed them to the English college at Douay. Mr. Woodhead is one of the writers, to whom the celebrated *Whole Duty of Man* has been attributed. On that subject the

XIII.

SOME time after our Author's return to England, from his travels with Mr. Edward Howard, he was chosen president of the English college at St. Omer's. That college was originally founded by the English Jesuits. On the expulsion of the society from France, the English Jesuits shared the fate of their brethren.

editor is in possession of the following note in our Author's hand-writing.—“ Mr. Simon Berrington, who died in 1758, “ endeavoured to give Mr. Woodhead the honour of being “ the author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, and other works of “ the same kind, but there is a difference of style between “ them; there occurring in the *Whole Duty of Man*, and the “ other works of that author, scarce any parentheses, with “ which all Mr. Woodhead's works abound. Nevertheless, “ certain it is, that Dr. John Fell, dean of Christ Church, “ (afterwards bishop of Oxford), who published the other “ works of the author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, namely, “ the *Ladies Calling*, the *Art of Contentment*, the *Govern-* “ *ment of the Tongue*; the *Lively Oracles* given unto us, “ &c. in folio at Oxford in 1675-1678, and wrote the preface “ which he prefixed to this edition, and who was the only “ person then living who knew the author of the *Whole Duty* “ *of Man*, gave this book of the *Whole Duty of Man* to his “ bookbinder and Hawkins his bookseller in London, with “ other pieces of Mr. Woodhead's, and ordered Mr. Wood- “ head's name to be added to the title of this as well as of the “ other works which he gave to be bound.—If Mr. Woodhead “ wrote that celebrated work, it was before he travelled “ abroad, or had any thoughts of embracing the catholic “ faith.” The same anecdote was mentioned to the editor by the late Mr. Challoner.

On his being named to the presidency of the English college at St. Omer's, doubts were suggested to him, on the justice or propriety of his accepting the presidency of a college, which in fact belonged to others. He advised with the hishop of Amiens and the bishop of Bologne upon this point, and they both agreed in opinion, that he might safely accept it.

He continued president of the college of St. Omer's till his decease. It was expected by his friends, that his office of president would leave him much time for his studies ; but these expectations wholly failed. He was immediately appointed vicar-general to the bishops of Arras, St. Omer's, Ipres, and Bologne. This involved him in an immensity of business; and, his reputation continually increasing, he was consulted from every part of France on affairs of the highest moment. The consequence was, that, contrary to the wishes and expectations of his friends, he never was so little master of his time, as he was during his residence at St. Omer's. The editor has been favoured with the following letter, which will show the esteem in which our Author was held, by those who, at the time we speak of, lived in habits of intimacy with him.

“ You have occasioned me, sir, to experience a
“ heartfelt satisfaction in allowing me an inter-
“ course with you on the subject of the late Mr.
“ Butler, your uncle, and to communicate to you

“ the particulars within my knowledge, concerning
“ the life, the eminent virtues and uncommon abili-
“ ties of that celebrated gentleman. Never was
“ I acquainted with any of my cotemporaries who
“ was at once so learned, so pious, so gentle, so
“ modest; and whatever high opinion might be
“ conceived of him, from a perusal of his immortal
“ work on the Lives of the Saints; that master-
“ piece of the most extensive erudition, of the most
“ enlightened criticism, and of that unction which
“ commands the affections; such an opinion is
“ greatly inferior to the admiration which he in-
“ spired to those persons, who, like myself, had the
“ happiness to live in intimate connection with him,
“ the paternal kindness, and, I am bold to say it,
“ the tender friendship, with which he honoured my
“ youth, have indelibly engraved on my heart the
“ facts I am about to relate to you with the most
“ scrupulous exactness. Monsieur de Conziè now
“ bishop of Arras, having been raised to the see of
“ St. Omer’s in 1766, caused me to be elected a
“ canon in his cathedral church; he nominated me
“ one of his vicar-generals, and I repaired thither
“ on the 5th of October 1767.

“ That prelate, whose high reputation dispenses
“ with my encomiums, mentioned your uncle to
“ me, on the very day of my arrival. ‘ I am here
“ possessed,’ said he, ‘ of a hidden treasure; and
“ that is Mr. Butler the president of the English
“ college. I for the first time saw him,’ added he,

“ during the ceremony of my installation. He was
“ kneeling on the pavement in the midst of the
“ crowd, his countenance and deportment had
“ something heavenly in them : I inquired who
“ he was, and upon his being named to me, I caus-
“ ed him, though reluctant, to be conducted to one
“ of the first stalls in the choir. I will entreat him,’
said moreover the prelate, “ to favour you with his
“ friendship ; he shall be your counsel, you cannot
“ have a better.’ I made answer, that M. de Beau-
“ mout, the illustrious archbishop of Paris, in whose
“ palace I had enjoyed the invaluable benefit of
“ passing two years, had often spoken of him to me
“ in the most honourable terms ; that he had com-
“ missioned me, at my departure, to renew to him
“ the assurance of his particular esteem ; and that
“ I would neglect nothing to be thought worthy of
“ his benevolence.

“ I was so happy as to succeed in it within
“ a short time. His lordship the bishop conde-
“ scended to wish me joy of it, and intrusted me
“ with the design he had formed, of honouring the
“ assembly of his vicars-general by making him
“ our colleague. I was present when he deliver-
“ ed to him his credentials ; which moment will
“ never forsake my remembrance. I beheld your
“ dear uncle suddenly casting himself at the pre-
“ late’s knees, and beseeching him, with tears in his
“ eyes, not to lay that burden upon him. *Ah ! my*
“ *lord,*” said he to him, “ *I am unable to fill so*

“ *important a place* ; nor did he yield but upon
“ an express command : *Since you require it shall*
“ *be so*, said he, *I will obey ; that is the first of*
“ *my duties*. What an abundant source of reflection
“ was this for me, who was then but twenty-
“ six years of age. It was then especially that I
“ resolved to make up for my inexperience, by
“ taking him for my guide who had been giving
“ me that great example of christian humility.

“ The bishop had already showed him his confidence, by placing his own nephew in the English college, as also that of the bishop of Senlis, his friend and the son of one of his countrymen. I had the charge of visiting them frequently. I used to send for them, to dine with me on every school holiday. If one of them had been guilty of a fault, the punishment I inflicted was, that he should desire Mr. Butler to keep him at home. But it almost always proved useless ; he would himself bring me the delinquent, and earnestly solicit his pardon ; *Depend upon it*, said he to me one day, *he will behave better for the future*. I asked him what proof he had of it. Sir, answered he, in the presence of the lad, *he has told me so*. I could not forbear smiling at such confidence in the promises of a school-boy of ten years old ; but was not long before I repented. In a private conversation he observed to me, that one of the most important rules in education is to impress children with a

“ persuasion that the vices we would keep them
“ from, such as lying, and breaking one’s word,
“ are too shocking to be thought possible. A maxim
“ this, worthy of the great Fenelon his beloved
“ model, and which common tutors do not so much
“ as surmise.

“ Those three youths, our common functions
“ of vicars-general, the delightful company of your
“ uncle, and the frequent need I had of drawing
“ from that source of light, carried me almost every
“ day to the English college. I could delineate to
“ you, sir, his ordinary course of life in the inward
“ administration of that house ; I could tell you of
“ his assiduosity at all the exercises ; of his con-
“ stant watchfulness ; of the public and private
“ exhortations he made to his pupils, with that per-
“ suasive eloquence we meet with in his writings ;
“ of his pious solicitude for all their wants ; and of
“ their tender attachment to him. His room was
“ continually filled with them. He never put on
“ the harsh and threatening magisterial look : he
“ was like a fond mother surrounded by her chil-
“ dren ; or, he was rather, according to the ex-
“ pression*, the eagle not disdaining to teach her
“ young ones to soar, and carrying them on her
“ expanded wings, to save them from a fatal
“ fall. But I leave to his worthy co-operators the

* Sicut aquila provocans ad volandam pullos suos et super
eos volitans expandit alas suas.—Deuteron. cap. 22.

“ satisfaction of detailing to you those particulars,
“ which I only transiently beheld, and which I
“ never saw without being affected. How many
“ interesting anecdotes will they have to acquaint
“ you with !

“ Every instant that Mr. Butler did not dedi-
“ cate to the government of his college he employed
“ in study ; and, when obliged to go abroad, he
“ would read as he walked along the streets. I
“ have met him with a book under each arm, and
“ a third in his hands, and have been told, that,
“ travelling one day on horseback, he fell a reading,
“ giving the horse his full liberty. The creature
“ used it to eat a few ears of corn that grew on the
“ road side. The owner came in haste, swearing
“ he would be indemnified. Mr. Butler, who
“ knew nothing of the damage done, no sooner
“ perceived it, than, blushing, he said to the
“ countryman, with his usual mildness, that his
“ demand was just ; he then draws out a louis d’or
“ and gives it to the fellow, who would have been
“ very well satisfied with a few pence, makes re-
“ peated apologies to him, easily obtains forgive-
“ ness, and goes on his way.

“ Notwithstanding such constant application,
“ the extensiveness of his knowledge was next to a
“ prodigy. Whenever I happened to consult him
“ on any extraordinary question, upon which the
“ authors most familiar to us were silent, he would
“ take me to the library of the abbey of St. Bertin,

“ would ask for old writers, whose names I was
“ scarce acquainted with, and point out to me, even
“ before I had opened them, the section and chapter
“ in which I should find my difficulty solved.

“ Nor would I have you think, Sir, that the
“ ecclesiastical sciences were the only that he had
“ applied to. A couple of anecdotes I am going
“ to relate, and which I could hardly have believed,
“ had I not been witness to them, will prove to
“ you that every kind of information was re-united
“ in his intellect, without the smallest confusion.

“ Monsieur de Conziê, after his translation
“ from the bishopric of St. Omer’s to that of Arras,
“ invited him to come and see him there. My
“ brother vicars and myself sought one day for a
“ question which he should not be able to answer,
“ and thought we had found one. Accordingly
“ we asked him, what was the name of a pear,
“ called, (in French) *bon Chretien*, before the
“ coming of Christ, and Christianity. *There are*,
“ answered he, *two systems on that point*; and
“ then quotes us two modern naturalists, sets forth
“ their opinions, and unfolds to us the authorities
“ with which they backed them. I had the curiosity
“ to ascertain one of those quotations, and found it
“ accurate to a tittle.

“ A few days after, the bishop of Arras, having
“ his drawing-room filled with company, Mr.
“ President was announced; the bystanders think-
“ ing it to be the first president of the council

“ d’Artois, opened him a gangway to come at the
“ prelate ; they behold a priest enter, whom, by
“ his bashful and modest looks, they take for some
“ country curate, and by a simultaneous motion
“ they close up the passage, which they had made.
“ The bishop, who had already descried his dear
“ president of the English college, perceived also
“ the motion, and resolved to put the authors of it
“ to the blush. He observed in one corner of the
“ room a group of military men ; he goes up to
“ them, and finding they were conversing upon the
“ question keenly debated at that time, whether in
“ battle the *thin order*, observed in our days, be
“ preferable to the *deep order* of the ancients ; he
“ called to Mr. Butler and asked him, what he
“ thought of it ? I then heard that amazing man,
“ talking on the art of war, with the modest tone
“ of a school-boy, and the depth of the most con-
“ summate military man. I observed admiration
“ in the countenance of all those officers ; and saw
“ several of them, who, being too far off, stood up
“ upon chairs to hear and see him. They alto-
“ gether put to him questions upon questions, and
“ each of his answers caused fresh applause.

“ His lordship left us to go and join another
“ group, consisting of magistrates, who were dis-
“ cussing a point of common law ; and in like
“ manner called upon his oracle, who, by the
“ sagacity of his reflections, bore away all suffrages,
“ and united their several opinions.

“ The prelate, next, taking him by the hand,
“ presented him to the ladies, seated round the
“ fire-place, and asked him whether the women in
“ ancient times wore their head-dresses as high as
“ ours then did. *Fashions*, answered he, *like the*
“ *spokes of a wheel turning on its axis, are*
“ *always replaced by those very ones which they*
“ *have set aside.* He then described to us the
“ dresses both of the men and women, in the
“ various ages of our monarchy; *and, to go still*
“ *farther back*, added he, *the statue of a female*
“ *Druid has been found, whose head-dress*
“ *measured half a yard in height; I have been*
“ *myself to see it, and have measured it.*

“ What astonished me most, was, that studies
“ so foreign to the supernatural objects of piety,
“ shed over his soul neither aridity nor lukewarm-
“ ness. He referred all things to God, and his
“ discourse always concluded by some christian
“ reflections, which he skilfully drew from the
“ topic of the conversation. His virtue was neither
“ minute nor pusillanimous: religion had in his
“ discourse, as well as in his conduct, that solemn
“ gravity, which can alone make it worthy of the
“ Supreme Being. Ever composed, he feared
“ neither contradictions nor adversities: he dreaded
“ nothing but praises. He never allowed himself
“ a word that could injure any one's reputation.
“ His noble generosity was such, that, as often as I
“ happened to prize in his presence any one of his

“ books, or of the things belonging to him, I the
 “ same day found them in my possession. In short,
 “ I will confess it, to my confusion, that for a long
 “ time I sought to discover a failing in him ; and
 “ I protest, by all that is most sacred, that I never
 “ knew one in him. These are the facts, Sir, you
 “ was desirous of knowing ; in the relation of which
 “ I have used no exaggeration, nor have had any
 “ thing to dissemble. I have often related these
 “ facts to my wondering friends, as a relief to my
 “ heart ; and indeed, notwithstanding the distance
 “ of time, they recur as fresh to my remembrance
 “ as if just transacted before my eyes.

“ I was at a distance from St. Omer’s when
 “ death robbed me of my respectable friend.
 “ Time has not alleviated the sorrow which the
 “ loss of him fixed deeply in my breast. I have
 “ preciousy preserved some of his presents, and
 “ carefully concealed them at my leaving France.
 “ May I one day find again those dear pledges of
 “ a friendship, the recollection of which is in our
 “ calamities the sweetest of my consolations. I
 “ have the honour to be, with the highest regard,

SIR, Your most obedient, &c. &c.

At the Hague,
Dec. 30, 1794.

“ L’Abbe de la SEPOUZE.”

During our Author’s stay at St. Omer’s, a thesis was printed and publicly defended, in a neighbouring university, which excited his attention. Mr.

Joseph Berington presided at the defensions of it. It certainly contained many propositions which were offensive to pious ears : but respectable persons are said to have declared, that it contained nothing materially contrary to the faith of the roman-catholic church ; and the editor feels it a duty incumbent on him to add, that one of the bishops, to whom our Author was grand vicar, mentioned to the editor, that he thought his vicar had shown too much vivacity on that occasion.

XIV.

BOTH from our Author's letters, and from what is recollected of his conversations, it appears that he often explicitly declared, that, if powerful measures were not adopted to prevent it, *a Revolution in France*, would take place, both in church and state. He thought irreligion, and a general corruption of manners, gained ground every where. On the decay of piety in France, he once mentioned in confidence to the editor a circumstance, so shocking, that even, after what has publicly happened, the editor does not think himself justifiable in mentioning it in this place. He seems to have augured well on the change of ministry which took place on the expulsion of the Choiseuls. He was particularly acquainted with the cardinal de Bernis, and the mareschal de Muy. Of the latter he writes thus in one of his letters : “ Mr. de Muy, who has
“ sometimes called upon me, and often writes to

“ me, as the most affectionate of friends, is un-
“ nimonously called the most virtuous and upright
“ nobleman in the kingdom. The late Dauphin’s
“ projects, in favour of religion, he will endeavour
“ to execute. He is minister of war. The most
“ heroic piety will be promoted by him by every
“ method: if I gave you an account of his life,
“ you would be charmed by so bright a virtue.”

XV.

OUR Author had *projected many works* besides those which we have mentioned. Among them his treatise on the *Moveable Feasts* may be reckoned. He very much lamented that he had not time to complete it: what he had prepared of it, he thought too prolix, and if he had lived to revise it, he would have made great alterations in it. Some time after his decease it was published under the inspection of Mr. Challoner. He proposed writing the lives of Bishop FISHER and Sir THOMAS MORE, and had made great collections, with a view to such a work: some of them are in the hands of the editor, and are at the command of any person to whom they can be of use. He had begun a treatise to explain and establish the truths of *natural and revealed religion*; he was dissatisfied with what Bergier had published on those subjects. He composed many *sermons*, and an immense number of *pious discourses*. From what remained of the three last articles, *the three volumes of his discourses*, which have appeared since his decease, were collected. The editor is

happy in this opportunity of mentioning his obligations to the reverend Mr. Jones, for revising and superintending the publication of them. They are acknowledged to possess great merit : the morality of them is entitled to great praise ; the discourse on conversation shows a considerable knowledge of life and manners. Having mentioned his sermons, it is proper to add, that as a preacher he almost wholly failed. His sermons were sometimes interesting and pathetic : but they were always desultory, and almost always immeasurably long. The editor has lately published his *Short Life of Sir Toby Matthews*.

He was very communicative of his manuscripts, and consequently many of them were lost ; so that, on an attentive examination of them, after his decease, none but those we have mentioned were thought fit for the press.

XVI.

THE number of *letters* written by our Author exceeds belief ; if they could be collected, they would be found to contain an immense mass of interesting matter, on many important topics of religion and literature. He corresponded with many persons of distinction both among the communicants with the see of Rome, and the separatists from her. Among the former may be reckoned the learned and elegant Lambertini, who afterwards, under the name of Benedict the fourteenth, was honoured with the papal crown : among the latter

may be reckoned Dr. Lowth, the bishop first of Oxford, afterwards of London, the celebrated translator of Isaiah. In a Latin note on Michaelis, our Author speaks of that prelate as his intimate acquaintance, "*necessitate conjunctissimus.*"

He had the happiness to enjoy the friendship and esteem of many persons distinguished by rank, talents, or virtue. The holy bishop of Amiens spoke of him in the highest terms of admiration and regard. In the life written in French of that excellent prelate, he is mentioned "as the most learned man in Europe." He is styled by father Brotier, in his preface to his edition of Tacitus, "*sacrâ eruditione perceleber.*" The late Mr. Philips, in the preface to his life of cardinal Pole, mentioning the edition of his letters by cardinal Quirini, expresses himself thus:—"they were
" procured for the author by Mr. Alban Butler,
" to whom the public is indebted for the most useful
" and valuable work which has appeared in the
" English language, on the Lives of the Saints,
" and which has been so much esteemed in France,
" that it is now translating into the language of
" a country celebrated for biography, with large
" additions by the author. This gentleman's readi-
" ness on all occasions to assist the author in his
" undertaking, was answerable to his extensive
" knowledge and general acquaintance with what-
" ever has any relation to erudition."—Our Author

was not satisfied with the French translation of his work: the writers professed to translate it freely; but he thought that they abused the privilege of free translation, that they misrepresented his meaning, that their style was affected, and that the devotional cast which he had laboured to give the original, was wholly lost in their translation. The editor has heard that a translation of it was begun in the Spanish and Italian languages, but he has seen no such translation. Dr. Kennicot spoke loudly of our Author's readiness and disinterested zeal to oblige. Even the stern Mr. Hollis mentions him, in his memoirs, with some degree of kindness. No person was more warmly attached to his friends. With his affectionate and generous disposition, no one was more sensible of unkindness, than he was; but none forgave it more readily. It was his rule to cultivate those who were inimical to him by every mark of attention and act of kindness; and rather to seek, than avoid an intercourse with them. His incessant attention to his studies frequently made him absent in society: this sometimes produced whimsical incidents.

Whatever delight he found in his literary pursuits he never sacrificed his religious duties to them, or permitted them to trespass on *his exercises of devotion*. Huet, whom, from his resemblance to our author in unremitted application to study, the editor has often had occasion to mention, laments

his own contrary conduct in very feeling terms:—
“ I was entirely carried,” says he, (*de rebus ad eum pertinentibus*, 174) “ by the pleasure found in
“ learning: the endless variety which it affords had
“ taken up my thoughts, and seized all the avenues
“ of my mind, that I was altogether incapable of
“ any sweet and intimate communication with God.
“ When I withdrew into religious retirement, in
“ order to recollect my scattered thoughts, and
“ fix them on heavenly things, I experienced a
“ dryness and insensibility of soul by which the
“ Holy Spirit seemed to punish this excessive bent
“ to learning.” This misfortune our Author never experienced. A considerable portion of his time was devoted to prayer. When it was in his power, he said mass every day: when he travelled, he rose at a very early hour, that he might hear it: he never neglected the prayer of the *Angelus*, and, when he was not in the company of strangers, he said it on his knees. He recommended a frequent approach to the sacrament of the altar: some, under his spiritual direction, communicated almost every day. The *morale sévère* of the jansenists he strongly reprobated in discourse, and no person receded farther from it in practice: but he was an admirer of the style of the gentlemen of Port Royal, and spoke with praise of their general practice of avoiding the insertion of the pronoun, *I*, in their writings. He thought the bible should not be read by very young persons, or by those who

were wholly uninformed : even the translation of the whole divine office of the church, he thought should not be given to the faithful, promiscuously. In the printed correspondence of Fenelon, a long letter by him on frequent communion, and one on reading the Bible, (they deserve to be translated and generally read), express exactly our Author's sentiments on those subjects. All singularity in devotion was offensive to him. He exhorted every one to a perfect discharge of the ordinary duties of his situation, to a conformity to the divine will both in great and little occasions, to good temper and mildness in his intercourse with his neighbour, to an habitual recollection of the divine presence, to a scrupulous attachment to truth, to retirement, to extreme sobriety. These he used to say were the virtues of the primitive christians, and among them, he said, we should always look for perfect models of christian virtue. Fleury's account of them, in his *Manners of the Christians*, he thought excellent, and frequently recommended the perusal of it. He exhorted all to devotion to the mother of God ; many under his care, said her office every day. The advantage of mental prayer he warmly inculcated. In the conduct of souls he was all mildness and patience : motives of love were oftener in his mouth than motives of fear ; " for to him that loves, nothing," he used to say, with the author of the imitation of Christ, " is difficult." He often sacrificed his studies and private devotions to the

wants of his neighbour. When it was in his power he attended the ceremony of the *salût* at the parish church ; and on festivals particularly solemnized by any community of the towns in which he resided, he usually assisted at the divine service in their churches. He was very abstemious in his diet ; and considered systematic sensuality as the ultimate degradation of human nature. He never was heard to express so much disgust, as at conversations where, for a great length of time, the pleasures of the table, or the comparative excellence of dishes, had been the sole topic of conversation ; yet he was very far from being an enemy to rational mirth, and he always exerted himself to entertain and promote the pleasures of his friends. In all his proceedings he was most open and unreserved : from selfishness, none could be more free. Dr. Kennicot often said, that, of the many he had employed in his great biblical undertaking, none had shown more activity, or more disinterestedness, than our Author. He was zealous in the cause of religion, but his zeal was without bitterness or animosity : polemic acrimony was unknown to him. He never forgot, that in every heretic he saw a brother christian ; in every infidel he saw a brother man. He greatly admired *Drouen de Sacramentis* and *Boranga's Theology*. *Tournely* he preferred much to his antagonist, *Billouart*. He thought *Houbigant* too bold a critic, and objected some novelties to the *Hebraizing Friars of the Rue St. Honoré*. He

believed the letters of *Ganganelli*, with the exception of two or three at most, to be spurious. Their spuriousness has been since placed beyond controversy by the *Diatribes Clementine* published in 1777. *Caraccioli*, the editor of them, in his *remerciement a l'auteur de l'année Littéraire de la part de l'Editeur des Lettres du Pape Ganganelli*, acknowledges that he filled sixty pages at least of them, with thoughts and insertions of his own compositions. In the hand-writing of a gentleman remarkable for his great accuracy, the editor has before him the following account of our Author's sentiments on usury.

“ Mr. Alban Butler's opinion of receiving interest
“ for money, in a letter dated 20th June 1735,
“ but copied anno 1738.—In England and in
“ some other countries, the laws allow of five per
“ cent. and even an action at law for the payment
“ of it. This is often allowable in a trading country;
“ and, as it is the common practice in England, I
“ shall not blame any one for taking or even
“ exacting interest-money; therefore will say
“ nothing against it in general: but, in my own
“ regard, I am persuaded it is not warrantable in
“ conscience, but in three cases; viz. either for a
“ gain ceasing, as merchants lend money which
“ they would otherwise employ in trade, *lucrum*
“ *cessans*: or secondly, some detriment the lender
“ suffers by it, *damnum emergens*: or thirdly,
“ some hazard in the principal money, by its being
“ exposed to some more than ordinary danger in

“ being recovered safely. Some time afterwards
“ the said Alban Butler was convinced there was
“ no occasion of scruple in receiving interest for
“ money, so that it was at a moderate or low rate of
“ interest ; and that there was reason to believe the
“ borrower made full the advantage of the money
“ that he paid for it by the interest.”

Our Author's love of learning continued with him to the last. Literary topics were frequently the subject of his familiar conversation. He was a great admirer of what is called the simple style of writing ; and once mentioned that if he could acquire a style by wishing for it, he should wish for that of Herodotus. He thought the orator appeared too much in Cicero's philosophical works, except his offices : that work he considered to be one of the most perfect models of writing which have come down to us from antiquity. He professed to discover the man of high breeding and elegant society in the commentaries of Cæsar ; and to find expressions in the writings of Cicero which showed a person accustomed to address a mob, the *fæx Romani populi*. He believed the works of Plato had been much interpolated ; and once mentioned, without blame, father Hardouin's opinion, that they were wholly a fabrication of the middle age. Of the modern Latin poets, he most admired Wallius, and in an illness desired his poems to be read to him. He himself sometimes composed Latin poetry. He preferred the *Paradisus Animæ* to its rival prayer-

book, the *Cæleste Palmetum*. Of the last he spoke with great contempt. The little rhyming offices, which fill a great part of it, are not very interesting ; but, the explanation in it of the psalms in our Lady's office, of the psalms in the office for the dead, of the gradual and seven penitential psalms, and of the psalms sung at vespers and complin, is excellent. A person would deserve well of the English catholics who should translate it into English. The *Cæleste Palmetum* was the favourite prayer-book of the Low Countries. By Foppens's *Bibliotheca Belgica*, it appears that the first edition of it was printed at Cologne in 1660, and that, during the first eight years after its publication, more than fourteen thousand copies of it were sold. Most readers will be surprised, when they are informed that our Author preferred the sermons of Bossuet to those of Bourdaloue : but in this he has not been absolutely singular ; the celebrated cardinal de Maury has avowed the same opinion ; and, what is still more extraordinary, it has also been avowed by father Neuville. Bossuet's discourse upon Universal History may be ranked among the noblest efforts of human genius that ever issued from the press. In the chronological part of it, the scenes pass rapidly but distinctly ; almost every word is a sentence, and every sentence presents an idea, or excites a sentiment of the sublimest kind. The third part of it, containing his reflections on the events which produced the rise and fall of the

ancient empires of the earth, is not inferior to the celebrated work of Montesquieu on the greatness and fall of the Roman empire ; but, in the second part, the genius of Bossuet appears in its full strength. He does not lead his reader through a maze of argumentation, he never appears in a stretch of exertion ; but, with a continued splendor of imagery, magnificence of language, and vehemence of argument, which nothing can withstand, he announces the sublime truths of the christian religion, and the sublime evidence that supports them, with a grandeur and force that overpower and disarm resistance. Something of this is to be found in many passages of his sermons ; but, in general, both the language and the arguments of them are forced and unnatural. His letters to the nuns are very interesting. Let those who affect to talk slightly of the devotions of the religious, recollect that the sublime Bossuet bestowed a considerable portion of his time upon them. The same pen that wrote the discourse on Universal History, the funeral Oration of the prince of Condé and the History of the Variations, was at the command of every religious who requested from Bossuet a letter of advice, or consolation. “ Was he at Versailles, “ was he engaged on any literary work of importance, was he employed on a pastoral visit of his diocese ? “ still,” say the Benedictine editors of his works, “ he always found time to write to “ his correspondents on spiritual concerns.” In

this he had a faithful imitator in our Author. No religious community addressed themselves to him who did not find in him a zealous director, an affectionate and steady friend. For several among the religious he had the highest personal esteem. Those, who remember him during his residence at St. Omer's, will recollect his singular respect for Mrs. More, the superior of the English convent of Austins at Bruges. He was, in general, an enemy to the private pensions of nuns; (See Boudon's letter, *Sur le relachement qui s'est introduit dans l'observation du vœu de pauvreté*. Lettres de Boudon, vol. 1. p. 500.) but in this, as in every other instance, he wished the reform, when determined upon, to proceed gently and gradually.

All who have had an opportunity of observing the English communities since their arrival in this country, have been edified by their amiable and heroic virtues. Their resignation to the persecution which they have so undeservedly suffered, their patience, their cheerfulness, their regular discharge of their religious observances, and, above all, their noble confidence in Divine Providence, have gained them the esteem of all who know them. At a village near London, a small community of Carmelites lived for several months, almost without the elements of fire, water, or air. The two first, (for water unfortunately was there a vendible commodity), they could little afford to buy; and from the last (their dress confining them to their shed) they were

excluded. In the midst of this severe distress, which no spectator could behold unmoved, they were happy. Submission to the will of God, fortitude and cheerfulness, never deserted them. A few human tears would fall from them, when they thought of their convent; and with gratitude, the finest of human feelings, they abounded; in other respects they seemed of another world. “What-
“ever,” says Dr. Johnson, “withdraws us from
“the power of our senses; whatever makes the
“past, the distant, or the future, predominate over
“the present, advances us in the dignity of human
“beings.” It would be difficult to point out persons to whom this can be better applied than these venerable ladies,—whose lives are more influenced by the past, the distant, or the future, or so little influenced by the present.

Our Author was not so warm, on any subject, as the calumnies against the religious of the middle age: he considered the civilization of Europe to be owing to them. When they were charged with idleness, he used to remark the immense tracts of land, which, from the rudest state of nature, they converted to a high state of husbandry in the Hercynian wood, the forests of Champagne and Burgundy, the morasses of Holland, and the fens of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. When ignorance was imputed to them, he used to ask, what author of antiquity had reached us, for whose works we were not indebted to the monks. He could less endure,

that they should be considered as instruments of absolute power to enslave the people: when this was intimated, he observed, that, during the period which immediately followed the extinction of the Carlovingian dynasty, when the feudal law absolutely triumphed over monarchy, the people were wholly left to themselves, and must have sunk into an absolute state of barbarism, if it had not been for the religious establishments. Those, he said, softened the manners of the conquerors, afforded refuge to the vanquished, preserved an intercourse between nations; and, when the feudal chiefs rose to the rank of monarchs, stood as a rampart between them and the people. He thought St. Thomas of Canterbury a much injured character. He often pointed out that rich tract of country, which extends from St. Omer's to Liege, as a standing refutation of those, who asserted that convents and monasteries were inimical to the populousness of a country: he observed, that the whole income of the smaller houses, and two-thirds of the revenues of the greater houses, were constantly spent within twenty miles round their precincts; that their lands were universally let at low rents; that every abbey had a school for the instruction of its tenants, and that no human institution was so well calculated to promote the arts of painting, architecture, and sculpture, works in iron and bronze, and every other species of workmanship, as abbeys or monasteries, and their appendages. "Thus," he used to say,

“ though the country in view was originally a
“ marsh, and has for more than a century wholly
“ survived its commerce, it is the most populous
“ country in Europe ; and presents on the face of it
“ as great a display of public and private strength,
“ wealth and affluence, as can be found in any
“ other part of the world.”—Fortunately for him
he did not live to be witness to the domiciliary visit
which in our times it has received from France.
What would he have thought, if any person had
told him, that, before the expiration of the century
in which he lived, the French themselves would, in
perfect hatred of Christ, destroy the finest churches
of France?—At their profanation of his favourite
church of St. Bertin in the town of St. Omer’s, that
is said to have happened which Victor Vitensis
relates to have happened in the persecution of the
Vandals: (Hist. Pers. Van. 31.) “ Introeuntes
“ maximo cum furore, corpus Christi et san-
“ guinem pavimento sparserunt, et illud pollutis
“ pedibus calcaverunt.”

XVII.

Our Author enjoyed through life a good state of
health, but somewhat impaired it by intense appli-
cation to study. Some years before his decease he
had a slight stroke of the palsy which affected his
speech. He died on the 15th of May 1773, in the
63d year of his age. A decent monument of marble
was raised to his memory in the chapel of the English

college at St. Omer's, with the following inscription upon it, composed by Mr. Bannister :

Hic jacet

R. D. Albanus Butler (Bouteillier) Prænobilis Anglus.

Sacerdos et Alumnus Collegii Anglorum Duaci.

Ibidem S. T. Professor. Postmodum Missionarius in Patria.

Præses II. Collegii Regii Anglorum Audomari.

Vicarius Generalis

Illustrissimorum Philomelien. Deboren. Atrebaten. Audomaren.

Ex Vetustâ Ortus prosapiâ

In utrisque Angliæ et Galliæ Regnis

Amplâ et Florente.

Suavissimis Moribus,

Summis acceptissimus, Infimis benignus,

Omnium necessitatibus inserviens,

Pro Deo.

Propter Doctrinam et Ingenium, Doctissimis,

Propter Pietatem, Bonis omnibus,

Percharus.

Nobilissimæ Inventutis Institutionem,

Sacrarum Virginum curam,

Reverendissimorum Antistitum negotia,

Suscepit, promovit, expedit,

Opere, Scriptis, Hortatubus.

Sanctorum rebus gestis a Pueritiâ inhærens,

Acta omnia pernoscens,

Mentem et Sapientiam altè imbibens,

Multa scripsit de Sanctorum vitis,

Plena Sanctorum Spiritu, librata judicio, polita stylo,

Summæ ubertatis et omnigenæ eruditionis.

Apostolicæ sedis et omnis officii semper observantissimus.

Pie obiit 15 Mensis Maii 1773.

Natus annis 63. Sacerdos 39. Præses 7.

Hoc mœrens posuit Carolus Butler

Monumentum Pictatis suæ in Patrum Amatissimum.

END OF VOL. III.

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Butler , Charles (1750-1832)
Philological and biographical works. Vol.3.

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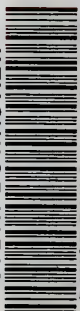
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